SOME FAMOUS PRIVATEERS OF NEW ENGLAND

From a print in the Main Office of the State Street Trust Company

THE BRIGANTINE *CAMBRIAN* OF BOSTON

This picture shows a sea fight in which the Boston brigantine *Cambrian*, with a crew of 6, William Marshall, Master, is beating off a French cutter privateer, carrying 35 men, which had attacked her just outside The Wash on October 23, 1804. The victory was acclaimed in Boston, and commemorated by a pictorial record of the fight, of which the above is a copy, and by the presentation to the gallant Bostonians of inscribed silver medals.

Some

FAMOUS PRIVATEERS *of* NEW ENGLAND

By

RALPH M. EASTMAN

Privately Printed
STATE STREET TRUST COMPANY
1928

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FOREWORD

"Success and fame attend the brave,
But death the coward and the slave
Who fears to plough the bounding wave
To seek out bold invaders."

From "SAILOR'S INVITATION"

IN this year's brochure the State Street Trust Company has returned to tales of the sea, believing that this subject is of great interest to all New Englanders. There are few persons in this section of the country who have not had at least one ancestor either follow the sea as a calling or as a ship merchant. A brochure dealing with the fighting, rollicking privateering days should make a fitting addition to our shipping series; so we have gathered what appear to be the most interesting stories of New England privateers and privateersmen of those eventful times. This material gives us a good idea of the spirit of the sturdy people of our eastern states, whose atmosphere, traditions and characteristics we have endeavored to keep alive in some of the features of the new main banking office of the Trust Company where we are always pleased to welcome our customers and their friends.

This brochure, the twenty-fourth of our series, was compiled by Ralph M. Eastman, Secretary to the President and Assistant Vice-President of this Company, with the coöperation of Allan Forbes, President, and Ashton L. Carr, Senior Vice-President. In his search for material the suggestions and counsel of Charles H. Taylor were found to be of inestimable value, and we wish here to express our deep appreciation of his spirit of helpfulness. He gave us the opportunity to see many rare old documents which have added much to the interest of this booklet. The Trust Company also gratefully acknowledges assistance given by Howard M. Chapin, of the Rhode Island Historical Society, the late Beverley Rantoul, Lawrence W. Jenkins of the Peabody Museum, Francis B. Crowninshield, Frederick S. Whitwell, Ingersoll Bowditch, Robert E. Peabody, Augustin H. Parker, Miss Katherine P. Loring, Louis Bacon, Neal Rantoul, Mrs. Charles E. Ober, Charles E. Ober, Octavius Thorndike Howe, M.D., C. K. Bolton, the late Arthur Lord, E. H. Redstone, Julius H. Tuttle, Clarence S. Brigham, E. C. Plummer, B. H. Ticknor, James O. Fagan, Z. W. Pease, F. A. Winslow, George P. Winship, Miss Ruth C. Olson, Miss Mildred B. Fitz, and Perry Walton and staff.

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IT is our intention each year to issue a publication which will prove enjoyable and of historical value to its readers, and we trust we have succeeded in doing so with this brochure. We hope the impression received will be so favorable that the reader will feel that our publications typify the institution which issues them and that the high standard maintained in their form and material is characteristic of the banking service we render.

We shall be very happy if the pleasure derived from our booklets induces our friends to think favorably of the State Street Trust Company when the occasion arises for opening a new bank account or renting a safe deposit box at any of our three offices. We also have storage facilities for silverware and other bulky valuables at our Main and Massachusetts Avenue offices.

It may be that some of our readers are not aware of the fact that our Trust Department is qualified by experience to serve effectively as Agent in the care of investments, as Trustee of living trusts, as Executor and Trustee under wills and in any other recognized trust capacity.

It will be a pleasure to us to furnish to those interested detailed information in regard to any of the various services which we render.

ALLAN FORBES,

President, State Street Trust Company.

Boston, 1928.

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PRIVATEER MODEL OF ABOUT THE YEAR 1800

Completely rerigged and equipped by Allan Forbes, President of the State Street Trust Company, guns turned by Charles E. Page, sails and flags by Mrs. Ethel T. Rogers, both of the office force. Copied from model owned by Henry G. Vaughan and from books loaned by the late Beverley Rantoul. Advice given by Llewellyn Howland, Henry M. Hutchings, Bernard Hart, L. W. Jenkins, and Robert B. Smith of the Marine Museum. Anchor cable by Plymouth Cordage Company, sail material by Wamsutta Mills, New Bedford. Signals about to be hoisted mean "Man the Prize," and were copied from Admiral David Porter's Code Book dated 1809. This model may be seen in the lobby of our Main Office.

Some FAMOUS PRIVATEERS *of* NEW ENGLAND

"Fought and sailed and took a prize
Even as it was their right;
Drank a glass and kissed a maid
Between the volleys of a fight.

Don't begrudge their lives of danger,
You are better off by far;
But, if war again comes—stranger,
Hitch your wagon to their star."

From an old poem.

THE PRIVATEER AND THE LETTER OF MARQUE

NOT many ages since, every individual possessed the power of punishing, and the avenging of wrongs was left to the injured person or his friends. So, among nations, frequent broils which originated between individuals gave rise by degrees to the custom of granting letters of reprisal. Letters of Marque and Reprisal were issued upon the petition of a subject who complained of injustice done to him by some foreign prince or subject, and these powers entitled the recipient to obtain satisfaction by seizing the goods of any subject of the offending state. The earliest instance of reprisals recorded in England was in the year 1295 under the reign of Edward I. The right of making reprisals is said to have belonged to every magistrate and even to private subjects until the reign of Charles VII of France. Judging from various documents in existence, it is probable that in the fifteenth century commissions were first issued to individuals in time of war, similar to those which were granted for making reprisals in time of peace. They still retained the name of "Letters of Marque and Reprisal." The first instance, however, in which their aid appears to have been considered important in carrying on a war was in the contest between Spain and her revolted provinces of the Low Countries which began in the year 1569.

For the benefit of any of our readers who may not be aware of the fact, it might be well to explain that the first armed vessels commissioned in this country under the authority of the state were designated privateers as distinguished from Letters of Marque. A privateer was in most respects, except as to ownership, similar to our state and national vessels, and its officers received the same titles as in the regular service. A Letter of Marque was a merchant vessel cleared for some port with a cargo, though she might sail in ballast, yet armed to resist aggression and authorized to take any of the enemy's vessels that came in her way. The officers received the same titles as were in

usage in the merchant service. With the Letter of Marque the capture of prizes was incidental; with the privateer it was the business of the cruise. The former was usually more lightly armed and carried a much smaller crew than the latter, provided, of course, the tonnage was the same.

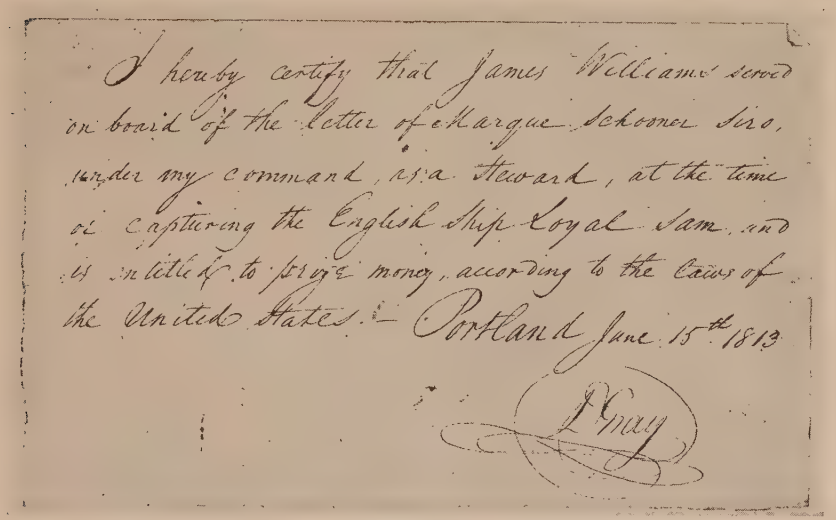
The usual terms of Articles of Agreement between the owners and the company of a vessel granted to captain and officers all belongings of officers of corresponding grade on prizes taken, always excluding gold, silver and merchandise. It was customary for the owners to get one-half of the net proceeds of all prizes, the other half being divided between the officers and crew. There was a special remuneration for the man who spied a prize or sail that proved worth $100 a share, and for the first man to board the enemy. Additional pay was also given for the loss of an eye, arm or leg, and the shares of those killed or dying on a cruise went to their legal representatives. Deserters lost their prize money, which went to the owners and crew after the debts of the deserter on board were paid.

Some authorities, including Captain Mahan, were of the opinion that privateering as a means of injuring the enemy was less effective than the use of state and national vessels. This is probably true, but it presupposes that the money spent in equipping private armed vessels would be expended on the navy and also that the men manning the vessels would enlist in the national service. As a matter of fact, in the Revolutionary War it would have been impossible to raise by taxation a tithe of the money spent on private armed vessels. Furthermore, had the state owned the vessels, they could have been filled only by impressment. The red tape and rigid discipline of a government vessel did not appeal to men as did the freer life of a privateer; and state ownership, moreover, was regarded by shipowners as less efficient than private control.

It is safe to say that had it not been for our privateers the Stars and Stripes would have been, for all practical purposes, completely swept from the seas during the Revolutionary War. It was the astonishing development of this form of maritime warfare that enabled the struggling colonists to hold their own on the ocean. The following figures are rather interesting as showing the number of privateers and guns carried during the years of the war:

Year	*No. Privateers*	*Guns*	*Year*	*No. Privateers*	*Guns*
1777	73	730	1780	228	3,420
1778	115	1,150	1781	449	6,735
1779	167	2,505	1782	323	4,845

Unfortunately, many of the cruises and actions of these craft have not been recorded. Numerous battles were fought, daring raids on the enemy's coasts were made, and many heroic incidents occurred that might well fill a volume with most valuable historical reading. As these vessels sailed, however, merely in a private capacity, most of their logs have been lost and the information that has been preserved is,


I hereby certify that James Williams served on board of the Letter of Marque Schooner Sirc, under my command, as a Steward, at the time of capturing the English Ship Loyal Sam, and is entitled to prize money, according to the laws of the United States. Portland June 15th 1813

Kindness of Charles H. Taylor

SHARE IN A LETTER OF MARQUE

Privateer and Letter of Marque shares were traded in much like stock certificates today.

as a rule, meagre and fragmentary. Enough is known, nevertheless, to show that these private ventures were fraught with thrilling incidents and were most important in their bearing on the results of the war.

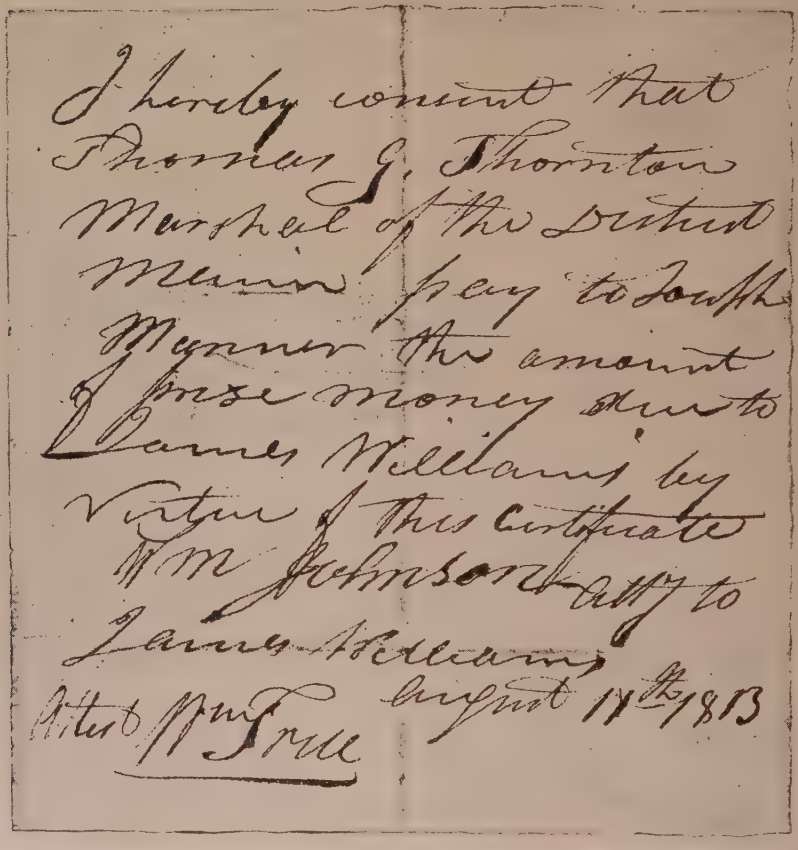
They carried miscellaneous cargoes in privateering days—missionaries in the cabin, and rum and tobacco in the hold—and everybody was aware of this condition, as it was the custom of the period.

A noticeable feature of the extraordinary development of privateering in this country was the rapid increase in the size and efficiency of the craft thus engaged. In the earlier part of the Revolutionary War any vessel, old or new, that could possibly be converted into a war craft was eagerly seized, a few guns mounted on her, and she was sent to sea, in some cases with the most curious assemblage of men imaginable. Physicians, lawyers, army officers, politicians, staid merchants, and even ministers of the Gospel were found in their complements. All, seemingly, were carried away by the "craze for privateering."

The officers and crews of the vessels commissioned by Washington received the same pay as officers and privates in the Continental Army, and in addition one-third part of the value of every vessel and cargo taken, after condemnation in the Courts of Admiralty. If the vessel were armed, one-half, instead of one-third, was given as prize money. As afterwards construed, this meant sufficiently armed to attempt resistance, and not a mere technical armament. Of this prize money the captain received six shares, the first lieutenant five shares, the second lieutenant four shares, the master two shares, the master's

mate one and a half shares, the gunner the same, and the mariners each one share.

As early as November 1, 1775, an act was passed by the Massachusetts Legislature empowering the Council to commission with Letters of Marque and Reprisal any person or persons within the Colony, to fit out and equip any vessel, at no expense to the state, for the defence of the Colonies, with general authority to take all vessels of the enemy. The master of the private armed vessel was required to give bonds as principal, with two good names as sureties, in order to satisfy any claim that might be made for illegal capture. The bond was $5,000 for vessels under 100 tons, and $10,000 for vessels of 100 tons and over. Later, as it was found that deserters


I hereby consent that
Thomas G. Thornton
Merchant of the District
Maine pay to Josiah
Mynner the amount
of prize money due to
James Williams by
virtue of this certificate
Wm Johnson Atty to
James Williams
Augst 11th 1813
Attest Wm True

Kindness of Charles H. Taylor

ENDORSEMENT OF A SHARE IN A LETTER OF MARQUE

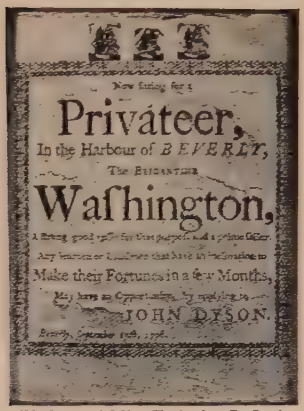
On exhibition at the Massachusetts Avenue Office of the State Street Trust Company

MODEL OF PRIVATEER *WARRING* OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

Granted Letters of Marque by Congress during the War of 1812.

from the Continental Army often enlisted on private armed vessels, the masters were put under bond not to take on board any soldier from the Continental Army or any man not a citizen of Massachusetts. Bonds were also required that the crews of any vessel captured should be turned over as prisoners to the state, and not, as in many previous instances, set free on some worthless prize to avoid expense. This was really in the interest of the privateersmen themselves, and if faithfully carried out would have saved many of them long confinement in English prisons. Prisoners, however, were a dangerous freight to carry, and this bond was often evaded in spite of the fact that English prisoners were needed in Massachusetts as material for exchange. It is from these bonds, necessarily signed by some of the owners, that much of the information concerning the privateers included in this booklet has been obtained.

The first private armed vessels sailing from Massachusetts in 1776 were small craft taken from the merchant service and not especially adapted to the work in which they were engaged. Many were sloops, some were schooners, but the favorite rig was the brigantine. These carried a large spanker with a square topsail on the mainmast instead of the usual gaff-topsail. They were armed with light cannon, old-


Now fitting for a
Privateer,
In the Harbour of BEVERLY,
The Brigantine
Washington,
A strong good built Vessel for that purpose, and a prime Sailer.
Any Seamen or Landmen that have a Inclination to
Make their Fortunes in a few Months,
May have an Opportunity by applying to
JOHN DYSON.

Kindness of Miss Katherine P. Loring

PRINTED HANDBILL

In the collection of the Beverly Historical Society.

fashioned swivel guns, blunderbusses, and a few muskets and pikes. The cannon used were long guns, as distinguished from carronades, and, so far as can be ascertained, with one exception no carronades were used on American private armed vessels during the war.

The rations allowed a privateer's crew were subject to the orders of the owner but, as private armed vessels were obliged to compete for seamen with the state vessels, it is probable that the fare on the two did not materially differ. The daily allowance of provisions for each officer and mariner, as prescribed by the state, October 12, 1776, may be of interest: one pound of bread, one pound of beef or pork, one gill of rice, and one gill of rum. Peas or beans to the amount of half a pint or a pound of potatoes or turnip might be substituted for the rice. Three-quarters of a pound of butter and one-half a pint of vinegar were allowed weekly. It is a disputed question whether the officers and crew of a privateer received wages in addition to their share of the prize money; they undoubtedly did receive wages on a Letter of Marque.

The sailors' shares in privateers and Letters of Marque were negotiable like certificates of stock, and commanded a high or low price according to the reputation of the vessel, the skill of the captain, the season of the year, or the necessities of the seller. The spirit of gambling, always rife in times of war or during periods of inflated currency, made them an attractive speculation, and they were divided like lottery tickets, as indeed they were, into halves, quarters and eighths, and floated on the market. It was necessary for a married or improvident mariner, upon signing for a cruise in a privateer, to make some provision for his family or creditors, and, as this could not be done by obtaining an advance on his wages, he was often obliged to sell the whole or part of his shares.

As the war progressed, and as the profits from prizes enriched the owners of these craft, new, swifter, and better vessels were built expressly for this service. Whereas at the outbreak of hostilities, ten guns were considered a large armament for a privateer, and thirty to sixty men were deemed sufficient to man each, toward the latter part of the war vessels mounting twenty, and even twenty-six guns, and having complements of one hundred and fifty to two hundred men, were the rule rather than the exception. As the government cruisers one by one fell into the hands of the enemy, were lost by shipwreck, or were blockaded in our ports, their number rapidly diminished, and Congress frequently called upon our privateers to perform missions of national importance.

That privateering had another side besides the adventurous one, however, is testified to by letters which we have been privileged to read, showing the many business arrangements that had to be made for the care of prizes when taken into various ports. The owners had to make arrangements with responsible agents in foreign as well as domestic ports, in order to care for the details involved in the sale of prizes and the disposal of the proceeds.

The death knell of privateering was sounded at a conference of representatives of all the leading nations held in Paris in 1856, when it was declared that privateering should be abandoned. The United States did not sign this convention, refusing to do so simply on the ground that its terms were not broad enough. That this country accepted the principle as right was shown at the time of its declaration of war against Spain in 1898, when it was announced that privateering would not be permitted. There used to be an old saying among the officers of the navy that they were looked upon by the people as pillars in war, but as caterpillars in peace. If such were the case with them, it applied all the more to the officers of privateers!

BEVERLY AS A PRIVATEER PORT

Prior to the Revolutionary War, Beverly was essentially a fishing village, but during the stirring days that followed it took its place as one of the most prominent ports from which sailed those hardy seamen who wrought such havoc with the shipping of the enemy. The names of Cabot, Brown, Thorndike, Batchelder, Homans and Lovett appear prominently as owners of privateers. Most of the vessels hailing from that port in the first three years of the war were manned by Beverly crews and usually included a strong contingent of Herricks, Gages, Ellingwoods, Lovetts, Fosters, Obers and Woodberrys. In fact, the two latter families could have officered and manned a large privateer with men of their own name.

From a portrait owned by Mr. Charles E. Ober, a descendant of Captain Hill

HUGH HILL

One of Beverly's most noted privateer captains.

It is probable that privateers from Massachusetts without commissions had been already cruising, but it was not until September 2, 1775, that the first regular commission was issued. On that date, acting under general powers, Washington, as Commander-in-Chief, writes to Nicholas Broughton of Marblehead: "You being appointed captain in the army of the United Provinces of North America are directed to take command of a detachment of said army and proceed on board the schooner *Hannah* at Beverly lately fitted out with arms, ammunitions and provisions." The *Hannah* was an ordinary

From a print owned by Octavius Thorndike Howe, M.D.

A VIEW OF THE TOWN OF BILBAO, SPAIN, AS IT WAS IN 1756

This port was a favorite rendezvous of American privateers.

fishing schooner belonging to Colonel John Glover, who, although a resident of Marblehead, owned a wharf in Beverly and conducted his fishing business from that place. In accordance with these orders, Captain Broughton, taking a detachment from Colonel Glover's regiment of Marblehead fishermen, who were well fitted by experience for the purpose, hoisted the flag on the *Hannah* and sailed on his first cruise. On September 7, 1775, he writes to Washington: "I beg leave to acquaint your Excellency that I sailed from Beverly last Tuesday with a fair wind and proceeded on my course. Took a ship off Cape Ann and sent her into Gloucester." This prize, the first taken by a regularly commissioned Massachusetts vessel, was the English ship *Unity*.

The reason given for Colonel Glover's delay in equipping two more vessels for the same service was reported by General Washington's agent, Colonel Stephen Maylan, in these terms: ". . . It is the spirit of equality which reigns throughout the country which makes him afraid of exerting his authority. He must shake every man by the hand and 'pray do, my brother, do, my friend,' whereas a few hearty damns from a person who does not care a damn for them would have a much better effect."

As the owners of the *Hannah* objected to putting extra sails on the vessel, it was necessary to replace her. Therefore, the schooner *Lee* was hired and Captain John Manley, of Marblehead, was put in command. This well-known captain was apparently one of the few naval officers with whom Washington was satisfied, and he held during the whole war an excellent reputation for conduct and courage. He commanded in rapid succession the schooners *Lee* and *Hancock*, the privateers *Cumberland* and *Jason* and the frigate *Hague*. The good luck of his early career did not continue, however, and he was three times captured and confined in English prisons. During the first two years of the war, Captain Manley commanded a fleet of privateers and conducted several cruises with the idea that five or six vessels could cover a large extent of water, while still being within supporting distance of each other, and take more prizes proportionally than when cruising singly.

The first privateer owned in and sailing from Beverly was the brigantine *Retaliation*, owned by Josiah Batchelder, Jr., and others, and commanded by Eleazer Giles, of that town. Her first trip was indeed a very fortunate one, but in the autumn of 1777 she was taken by an English vessel and carried into Halifax. Thus Eleazer Giles was the first Beverly captain to be taken prisoner; but he did not remain long in confinement, for in the spring of the following year he was allowed to return to Beverly in the cartel *Industry*. He afterwards commanded other privateers, and lost a leg in action on board the *Saratoga*.

The Beverly Historical Society owns an interesting printed handbill which reads: "Now fitting for a Privateer. In the harbor of Beverly, the Brigantine *Washington*. A strong, good vessel for that purpose and a prime sailer. Any Seaman or Landsman that has an

inclination to make their Fortunes in a few months may have an opportunity by applying to John Dyson. Beverly, Sept. 7, 1776."

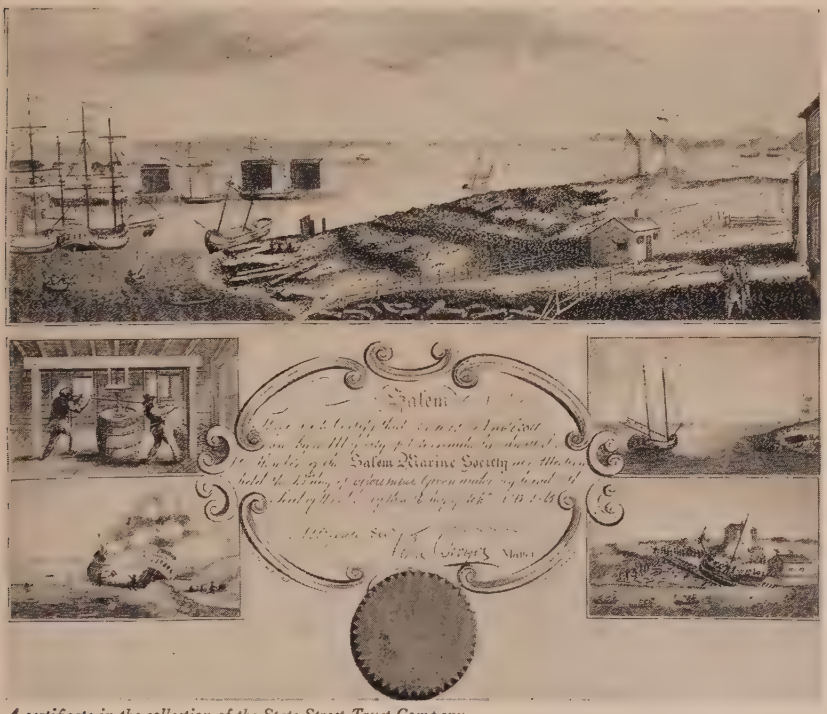
The *True American*, owned by Andrew Cabot, was commissioned in 1777; and John Buffinton, of Salem, was chosen as commander. Her first cruise was in company with Captain Manley, and on her return from this voyage she sailed as a Letter of Marque for Bilbao with a crew of 25 men. This port was the Mecca at which, sooner or later, all American privateers cruising in European waters finally arrived. Captain Lee of the *Hawk*, on his arrival at Salem in the autumn of 1776, reported 18 American privateers in that port when he left. Business relations between the merchants of Massachusetts and Bilbao had been close before the war, and now it was the most convenient port in which to sell prizes and refit. It was also a place where many owners had agents from whom money could be obtained on account; moreover a visit to Bilbao meant a chance for a spree. The Spaniards did not look with approval on the wild privateersmen as they marched singing through the narrow streets or caroused in the wine shops; but, if they did not love the Americans, nevertheless they liked their money and contented themselves with silent cursing.

While in Bilbao, the rig of the *True American* was changed from that of a schooner to a brig, and Captain Buffinton was directed to cruise a while in the Bay of Biscay and to take a prize or two, if possible. The next year this vessel, still under Captain Buffinton, made another voyage to Bilbao, and on her return passed into other hands.

One of the most successful privateers sailing from Beverly during the war was the *Oliver Cromwell*, which was owned by George, John and Andrew Cabot, Joseph Lee and others. On her first cruise she was commanded by Captain William Cole and took eleven prizes. The good luck of this vessel continued under various commanders until August, 1781, when she was captured by an English frigate while "dogging" the Quebec fleet and carried into Newfoundland.

Of all the privateers sailing from Beverly during the war, the *Pilgrim* was the most famous and probably the most successful. Hugh Hill, the man chosen to command this fine vessel, was the beau ideal of a privateer captain. Born at Carrickfergus, Ireland, in 1741, he had come to this country when a young man, and settled in Marblehead. Of good family, and cousin to Andrew Jackson, later President of the United States, he was an enthusiast in the cause of American liberty. Of immense size, muscular beyond the common, courageous almost to rashness, courteous to the fair sex and not burdened with scruples, he had all the characteristics which might have made him a famous captain in the days of Drake. The story is told of him that on one occasion while at L'Orient, France, a French gentleman in a cabaret considered himself insulted by some word or action of this reckless privateersman. "I will send my seconds to you in the morning," said the Frenchman. "What is the matter with here and now?" said Hugh Hill, drawing two pistols from his belt and offering one to the Frenchman. There was no duel.

One of the *Pilgrim's* prizes, the *Francesco di Paula*, was the cause



A certificate in the collection of the State Street Trust Company

CERTIFICATE OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE SALEM MARINE SOCIETY

The picture at the top shows, on the left, the famous Derby Wharf of Salem. This view appears in a larger illustration farther on in this book. The scene in the lower right corner shows the launching of the privateer *Fame* of Salem.

of long litigation which came near causing international complications with Spain. The case was one, common in war time, of an English-owned ship named *Valenciano*, rechristened *Francesco di Paula* and placed under Spanish colors. Joachi di Luci was her nominal and Peter White her real captain. The *Francesco* was condemned in our state courts, but the case was appealed to Congress, where the fear of offending Spain kept the case undecided for a long time. Finally the ship was condemned and the cargo returned to its owners.

In 1780 Captain Hill resigned his command and was succeeded by the famous Joseph Robinson of Salem. He was also a man of imposing presence, a good sailor and a good fighter, and under his command this Beverly ship was as successful as under her first commander. One of his prizes, the *Mars*, was captured only after a sharp battle lasting three hours, in which the English vessel lost her captain, several others were killed and eighteen were wounded.

The year 1779 was a disastrous one for the merchants of Massachusetts. During that part of the year when privateering was naturally

most lucrative, their armed vessels were employed by the state in the Penobscot expedition, which afforded neither glory nor profit. Moreover, its unfortunate conclusion left these gentlemen adventurers with little heart for new undertakings or means to make them had they wished to. The object of this military and naval venture was to oust the British from the peninsula in Penobscot Bay, now part of Castine, where they had established themselves in a strongly fortified position, named Fort George, in order to prevent the ships of Boston, Newburyport, Salem and Marblehead from making the Maine seaport a base for raids upon British commerce. A fleet of 19 ships, probably the strongest naval force furnished by New England during the Revolution, commanded by Dudley Saltonstall of New London, was assembled at Boston, and took aboard 1,200 militiamen and 100 artillerymen, the latter under command of Lieutenant Colonel Paul Revere, with the necessary supplies of ammunition, equipment and provisions. Setting sail on July 19, this expeditionary force seemed quite formidable but, due to a misunderstanding and lack of coöperation between the leaders of the soldiers and the commodore of the fleet, the undertaking resulted in complete and discreditable failure. The troops attacked one of the enemy's positions with suc-

Discovered through suggestion of Lawrence W. Jenkins *Kindness of Ingersoll Bowditch*

SILVER PRESENTED TO JONATHAN HARADEN BY THE OWNERS OF THE *PICKERING*

This silver was traced from the will of Captain Haraden's granddaughter, Hannah Haraden Ropes, under the terms of which, in 1862, she left "To Jonathan Ingersoll Bowditch my silver tankard and pair of cans which were presented to my maternal grandfather by the owners of the Ship *Pickering*." Curiously enough, search brought forth the fact that these pieces are now in the possession of the mother of our Director, Mr. Ingersoll Bowditch, who very kindly loaned them to us to be photographed.

cess, but soon an enemy fleet with reinforcements appeared and the Massachusetts men retreated to their transports. Commodore Saltonstall proceeded, for some unknown reason, to lead his ships into a trap at the head of the harbor of Castine, where they were all captured or burned. Attempts on the part of Brigadier General Solomon Lovell to collect his soldiers proved unsuccessful, and the survivors straggled back to Boston in small detachments, suffering great hardships on the way.

Fortunately, the *Black Prince* and the *Defence* were the only two vessels of this expedition in which Beverly capital was invested. Nevertheless, such was the lack of interest at this time that only two new commissions were issued to Beverly privateers during the whole year, and these were for vessels of trifling force.

While only a few of the more famous of the Beverly privateers and privateersmen have been mentioned, it will be seen that the citizens of that enterprising community may well be proud of the record made during the Revolutionary War, and further search into the early records without doubt will reveal many other interesting events.

JONATHAN HARADEN'S SPECTACULAR FIGHT

A ship's boy who was a prisoner aboard a British brig-of-war was standing one day at the rail peering intently at a speck of white which evidently was heading toward him, when suddenly his hat went up in the air and he began to sing and dance. When asked by the surprised sailors who stood near by as to the cause of his rejoicing, he replied with the utmost confidence:

"My master is in that ship and I shall soon be with him."

"Your Master! Who the devil is he?"

"Why, Captain Haraden. You don't mean you never heard of him? He takes everything he goes alongside of, and he will soon take you."

The British captain, when informed of these remarks, sent for the boy and had him repeat what he had said. During these precious moments, the *General Pickering* had approached within hailing distance and across the gale, in stentorian tones, came the order from Captain Haraden: "Haul down your colors or I'll fire into you."

The skillful seamanship of the American had put the British vessel in such a position that her guns could not be used to advantage, and after a brief and futile fire from her deck swivels and small arms she was obliged to haul down her colors. Thus was one more prize added to the many already standing to the credit of the intrepid Haraden.

This incident illustrates how Captain Haraden was regarded by those who served with him, and indicates how he became one of the most famous of American privateersmen. Easy-going to a fault when ashore, he was swift as lightning and sure as death in his grasp of essentials when afloat, and his coolness and audacity seemed never to forsake him. Again and again he was able to capture enemy ships by sheer nerve, without firing a shot. In fact, so great was the belief of

From a miniature in the possession of Charles H. Taylor

CAPTAIN
JONATHAN HARADEN

One of Salem's most famous heroes of privateering days.

his crew in the infallibility of his judgment that, if he picked up a glass to sight a vessel and ordered the helmsman to steer for it, the word often went around that another prize was certain.

On one occasion, while in command of the *General Pickering*, he fought for over four hours a "king's mail packet" bound from the West Indies to England. She proved a tough customer, for packets carried about 20 guns and complements of from 60 to 80 men, and Captain Haraden was finally forced to haul off to make repairs. Learning to his chagrin that he had but one charge of powder left, he tried the desperate plan of frightening his antagonist into surrender. Having loaded a gun with his last charge, and double-shotted it, he again ran alongside the badly cut-up but unconquered enemy and roared: "I will give you five minutes to haul down your colors. If they are not down at the end of that time, I will sink you, so help me God!"

The dread of another broadside at less than pistol range, combined with the sight of the determined-looking Haraden and his crew of half-stripped and bloody privateersmen, standing with lighted matches at their guns, was terrifying even to the plucky British captain, and before Haraden, standing on the quarter-deck with watch in hand, could count "four," down fluttered the packet's colors. When a prize crew from the *General Pickering* went aboard the captured vessel, they found the aged governor of the island from which the ship had sailed seated in an armchair on deck with a heavy blunderbuss at hand. A bullet had passed through his cheek, but, in consequence of his lack of teeth, it had gone out through the other side without causing a disastrous wound. Though this had happened early in the engagement, it had not stopped him from continuing the fire from his blunderbuss until the ship was surrendered.

Jonathan Haraden had had considerable experience on the sea before being given command of the *General Pickering*. He was born in Gloucester, and as a boy went to work for George Cabot, a Salem merchant, who was later president of the Hartford Convention and was great-grandfather of Henry Cabot Lodge, distinguished United States Senator from this State for so many years. As was the case with many Salem boys, desk and counter had no attractions that could compare with the lure of the sea; so it is not surprising that by the beginning of the Revolutionary War young Haraden had risen to a command in the merchant service.

With the outbreak of war, he was appointed lieutenant under Captain Fisk in the sloop *Tyrannicide*, belonging to George Cabot's

son Richard, which was one of the two small vessels placed in commission by the Massachusetts Colony as state vessels of war. Haraden distinguished himself in the various engagements in which the *Tyrannicide* took part, and later was promoted to the command of this modest vessel with the formidable name. However, he preferred greater freedom of action, and obtained his release from state duty after the sloop was burned during the Penobscot expedition to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemy. He was soon offered command of the *General Pickering*, a Salem merchant ship of 180 tons which was fitting out as a Letter of Marque. Mounting 14 six-pounders and carrying 45 men and boys, she set sail for Bilbao, Spain, in April of 1780, with a cargo of sugar. On her way across, she was attacked by a British cutter of 20 guns, but her captain beat off his antagonist and continued on his course after a running fight lasting about two hours. Proceeding to the Bay of Biscay, the *General Pickering* overtook, after nightfall, the British privateer schooner *Golden Eagle*, with 60 men and 22 guns. Laying alongside, Haraden exercised his consummate ability to bluff.

"This is an American frigate, sir," he shouted through his speaking trumpet as he sprang to the side of his vessel. "Strike, or I will sink you with a broadside."

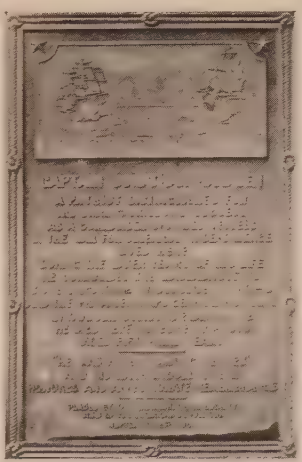
The darkness prevented the captain of the schooner from judging the size of the enemy, and Haraden's "bluff" evidently worked, for the British vessel was surrendered without a shot. At dawn the next morning, as the *Golden Eagle*, with a prizemaster aboard, approached the harbor in company with the *General Pickering*, a suspicious-looking vessel appeared, nosing her way out.

"What ship is that?" asked Haraden of the English captain whom he had taken aboard his vessel from the prize.

"That is the *Achilles*, and she carries more than 40 guns and has a crew of 150 men," was the reply, accompanied by a chuckle as the speaker thought what an easy victim Haraden would be to so powerful a privateer.

Haraden scrutinized the approaching vessel through a spyglass and then, laying it down, coolly observed, "She is a bit bigger than we are, but I shan't run from her." To the officer of the deck he said, "Keep the ship on her course, sir."

The wind died down so that about dusk the *Golden Eagle* had drifted far to leeward and fell an easy prey to the *Achilles*, which put a prize crew aboard



Kindness of Lawrence W. Jenkins

TABLET ON HOUSE ON ESSEX STREET, SALEM, WHERE CAPTAIN HARADEN SPENT THE LAST YEARS OF HIS LIFE

The scene at the top depicts the battle between the *General Pickering* and the *Achilles* outside Bilbao, described in the text.

and then beat up to windward to engage the *General Pickering*. It was now dark, and the commander of the *Achilles*, feeling sure of his prize, postponed engaging until the next morning. Haraden himself was quite as confident, and calmly sought his hammock and went to sleep, after ordering the officer of the watch to call him if the *Achilles* approached. He was aroused at daybreak by the report that the *Achilles*, with her crew at quarters, was heading for the *Pickering*, and he, therefore, ordered his men to their guns.

As he had put a number of his men on board the *Golden Eagle* as a prize crew, he now had but thirty left to man his vessel. In his extremity, he harangued so eloquently the sixty prisoners whom he had taken from the *Golden Eagle* that a boatswain and ten men offered to serve with the American crew.

"Now, men, don't throw away your fire; be firm and steady and we will take her," said Haraden as he made a tour of the decks, adding, "Take particular aim at their white boot-tops."

In the meantime, the *General Pickering* had been cleverly manœuvred between the land and a line of shoals, so that the *Achilles*, when she closed with the American vessel, would receive a raking broadside. Thousands from the city of Bilbao thronged the shore front on this morning of June 4, 1780, to witness the exciting fight between these two privateers. Fishing boats, cutters, rowboats, as well as large and small sailing vessels filled with spectators, were so crowded together along the quays and to within a short distance of the battling *General Pickering*, that an onlooker reported that it seemed like a solid bridge of boats, across which a man might have made his way by hopping from one gunwale to another. Robert Cowan, who witnessed the fight, stated that the *General Pickering*, compared to her antagonist, looked like a long boat by the side of a ship. Another onlooker said that Haraden fought with a determination that seemed superhuman, and although in the most exposed position, where the shot flew thick around him, he was all the while as calm and steady as if he were amid a shower of snowflakes.

Haraden so placed his vessel that the *Achilles* was exposed for over two hours to a raking broadside fire before she could work into the position she wished. The sugar with which the *General Pickering* was loaded made her so low in the water that the towering *Achilles* found it difficult to sweep her, while the *General Pickering's* low broadsides again and again swept the decks of the enemy with fearful effect. It seemed as if Haraden's composure increased with the deepening peril, and the more critical the situation, the more consummate was his skill in meeting it. Amid the rain of round and case shot, he appeared as much at ease as if he were safe in his Salem home. As the fire from the American swept the British vessel, cheer after cheer rose from the flotilla of boats watching the fight and from the thousands of Spaniards who packed the headlands. A most interested spectator of the conflict was the British prizemaster aboard the *Golden Eagle*, who inquired of the American prizemaster, John Carnes, who, in his turn, had been captured, what the strength of the *General Pickering* was.

"She carries about 45 men and boys and 14 six-pounders," was the reply.

"You're a liar," replied the astonished Britisher, with an oath; for he could not believe that a vessel so lightly armed could do such damage to the powerful *Achilles*.

After more than two hours of fierce fighting, the *Achilles* had been hulled again and again, her rigging was tattered, and her masts splintered so that she was almost unmanageable. Realizing the condition of the enemy, and learning that his own vessel was running short of ammunition, Captain Haraden resorted to the expedient of cramming the muzzles of his guns with crowbars. It is said that these flew like a flight of huge iron arrows, "made hash" of the enemy's decks and drove the gun crews from their stations, doing so much damage generally that the *Achilles* decided it was time to seek safety in flight. The heavily laden *General Pickering* hastened in pursuit, Haraden offering his gunners large sums if they could carry away one of the enemy's masts, or otherwise disable her. Being no match in speed for the *Achilles*, however, after three hours of chase the American vessel sorrowfully headed about for Bilbao.

On his way back to the harbor, Haraden recaptured the *Golden Eagle* and, upon landing, one would have thought he was the popular matador of a bull fight. The crowd swarmed to his landing place, caught him up, and carried him through the streets at the head of a triumphant procession of thousands. Numerous dinners and public receptions followed to honor this hero of one of the most spectacular engagements in all privateering annals. In fact, on account of the number of spectators who witnessed the battle, it has often been referred to as the "*Kearsarge-Alabama* fight of the Revolution."

The indomitable Haraden was destined to take part in many more exciting adventures before his death in Salem in the year 1803. During a voyage from his home port to France, a great English ship of the line came upon him at daybreak and escape seemed almost impossible. However, manning his sweeps, three of which were sheared off by a shot, the Yankee craft was rowed out of danger. Haraden was always ready to fight "at the drop of the hat," but had wisdom enough not to risk his vessel and the lives of his men in an action when the odds against him appeared insurmountable.

The *General Pickering*, under his command, made many voyages between this country and France, bringing back large quantities of provisions and munitions needed by the Continental Army. Later on, his ship was equipped with somewhat heavier armament, which stood him in good stead in two remarkable engagements. In one of these he captured three British ships carrying a total of 42 guns. In the other, he took a brig of 14 guns, a ship of 16 guns and a sloop of 14 guns on their way from Halifax to New York, by combining audacity with superb seamanship and by attacking one after the other so that they could not unite against him.

At another time, in effecting the capture of two exceptionally fast British privateer sloops which had retaken several of his prizes, though

not daring to risk action with the *General Pickering*, he disguised his vessel so that it appeared to be a plodding merchantman. Upon sighting him, these two alert foes set out in chase. Letting the first one come close, Haraden stripped off the painted canvas screens that had covered his gun ports, fired a devastating broadside, and captured the sloop without more ado. It hardly need be said that her consort as well was shortly in the possession of the ingenious Haraden. This is another bit of evidence that the art of camouflage was used on the sea many years before the World War made it so well known.

Toward the end of the Revolution, Haraden took command of the Letter of Marque ship *Julius Cæsar*, carrying 40 men and 14 guns, which he handled with such bravery and skill that her owners presented him with a massive plate. His descendants treasure a gift of silver received from the owners of the *General Pickering*, shown in an illustration on another page.

In the *Julius Cæsar*, Haraden fought successfully several engagements against two ships at a time. It is said that after one fight which lasted for over two hours, with neither side being able to gain a decisive advantage, Captain Haraden jokingly described the outcome by saying, "Both parties separated, sufficiently amused."

During his various cruises no less than a thousand enemy cannon were captured by this splendid seaman, who did far more to win the independence of his nation than many a landsman whose military achievements won the recognition of the government and an honored place in history.

The house in Salem where Captain Haraden died is now marked by a tablet to his memory.

THE *HERALD* OF SALEM, WITH STORIES OF CAPTAIN NATHANIEL SILSBEE, HER COMMANDER

In the year 1800, the *Herald*, bearing a Letter of Marque, had been engaged in a trading voyage to India under command of Captain Nathaniel Silsbee of Salem, afterward United States Senator from Massachusetts. On November 1, the captain left Calcutta, accompanied by four other American merchantmen who had decided to sail in company for mutual safety, as it was known that several French privateers were cruising in those waters.

The adventure they ran into, which had its amusing as well as serious side, is best described in Captain Silsbee's own words: "On the morning of November 3rd, at daylight, two strange sails were discovered a few leagues to windward of us, one of which was soon recognized to be the East India Company's packet ship *Cornwallis*, of 18 guns, which left the river at the same time with us. At about 8 A.M. the other ship stood toward the *Cornwallis*, soon after which the latter bore down upon us under full sail, commencing at the same time a running fight with the other ship, which then displayed French colors. We soon perceived that they were both plying their sweeps very briskly, that the Frenchman's grape was making great havoc on the *Cornwallis*

From a painting in the possession of F. S. Whitwell

PRIVATEER *HERALD* OF SALEM

Which was commanded by the famous Captain Nathaniel Silsbee.

and that the crew of the latter ship had cut away her boats and were throwing overboard their ballast and other articles for the purpose of lightening their ship. The sea was perfectly smooth and the wind very light, so much so that it was quite midday before either of the ships was within gunshot of us, by which time we (the five American ships) were in close line, our decks cleared of a large stock of poultry—which, with their coops, could be seen for a considerable distance around us—and every preparation made to defend ourselves to the extent of our ability. But this display of resistance on our part seemed to be quite disregarded by the pursuing ship, and she continued steering for my own ship, which was in the centre of our fleet, until she was fully and fairly within gunshot, when my own guns were first opened upon her, which were instantly followed by those of each and all of the other four ships.

"When the matches were applied to our guns the French ship was plying her sweeps, and, with studding sails on both sides, coming directly upon us. But when the smoke of our guns, caused by repeated broadsides from each of our ships, had so passed off as to enable us to see her distinctly, she was close upon the wind and going from us. The Captain of the *Cornwallis* (which was then within hailing distance) expressed a desire to exchange signals with us and to keep company

From "A History of American Privateers," by Edgar S. Maclay, A.M.

CAPTAIN
NATHANIEL SILSBEE

One of Salem's most noted privateer captains and a prominent business man of that community when it was one of the most famous of American ports.

while the French ship—which was known by him to be *La Gloire*, a privateer of 22 nine-pounders and 400 men—was in sight, which request was complied with; and, he having lost all his boats, I went on board his ship, where our signals were made known to him, and where the Captain and officers of the *Cornwallis* acknowledged the protection we had afforded them in the most grateful terms. The *Cornwallis* continued with us two days, in the course of which the French privateer approached us several times in the night, but, finding that we were awake, hauled off, and after the second night we saw no more of her."

One or two of the experiences of Mr. Silsbee on earlier voyages seem interesting enough to quote from his Autobiography, which was kindly loaned to us by his grandson, Mr. Frederick S. Whitwell.

While on the ship *Benjamin* a short time before his arrival at Boston, a schooner which was suspected of being an enemy privateer kept but a few miles away from them for several days. His story follows: "On the afternoon of the second day that this vessel had been dogging us, she bore down upon us with an apparent intention of executing what we had supposed to be her purpose, and which we were, as I had imagined, prepared to meet, but on calling our crew to the quarters which had previously been assigned to them, I was informed by one of my officers that there were four or five of the seamen who were unwilling thus to expose themselves, alleging that they had neither engaged or expected to 'fight'—on hearing this, all hands being on deck, I ordered every passageway which led below deck, excepting that leading to the cabin, to be securely fastened; then calling to me such of the crew as *had not engaged to fight*, I immediately sent them up the shrouds to repair the ratlins, and to perform other duties which they *had engaged to do*, in the most exposed parts of the ship. Finding themselves thus exposed to greater danger than their shipmates, they requested, before the schooner had come within gunshot of us, to be recalled from their then situation and allowed to participate in the defence of the ship, which request was granted—all our six guns were placed on one side of the ship and we succeeded, by a simultaneous discharge of the whole of them as soon as the schooner had approached within the reach of their contents, in causing her to haul off and hasten from us; but whether this was caused by an unexpected resistance on our part, or by any damage caused by that resistance, we could not ascertain—I felt quite as willing to be rid of her, however, as any one of her crew could have been to be rid of us."

JOHN ADAMS, PRESIDENT *of the* UNITED STATES *of* AMERICA,

To all who ſhall ſee theſe Preſents, Greeting:

Know Ye, THAT in purſuance of an Act of Congreſs of the United States in this caſe provided, paſſed on the ninth day of July, one thouſand ſeven hundred and ninety-eight, I have commiſſioned, and by theſe preſents do commiſſion the private armed *Ship* called the *Herald* of the burthen of *Three hundred twenty five* tons, or thereabouts, owned by *Ebenezer Preble Jr Samuel Sinkman of Boston Merchants & Nathaniel Silsbee of Salem Mariner, all in the State of Maſsachuſetts*

mounting *Ten* carriage guns, and navigated by *Thirty* men hereby licenſing and authorizing *Nathaniel Silsbee* captain, and *Nathaniel Hathorne 1st & Alexander Anderson 2d* lieutenants of the ſaid *Ship* and the other officers and crew thereof to ſubdue, ſeize and take any armed French veſſel which ſhall be found within the juriſdictional limits of the United States, or elſewhere on the high ſeas; and ſuch captured veſſel, with her apparel, guns and appurtenances, and the goods or effects which ſhall be found on board the ſame, together with all French perſons and others, who ſhall be found acting on board, to bring within ſome port of the United States; and alſo to retake any veſſels goods and effects of the people of the United States, which may have been captured by any French armed veſſel; in order that proceedings may be had concerning ſuch capture or re-capture in due form of law, and as to right and juſtice ſhall appertain. This commiſſion to continue in force during the pleaſure of the Preſident of the United States for the time being.

GIVEN *under my Hand and the Seal of the United States of America, at Philadelphia, the twenty ſecond day of January, in the year of our Lord, one thouſand ſeven eight hundred* ~~and ninety~~ *and of the Independence of the ſaid States, the twenty fourth.*

John Adams

By the Preſident,

Timothy Pickering *Secretary of State.*

The President's letter of marque to the privateer Herald.

From the original.

From "A History of American Privateers" by Edgar S. Maclay, A.M.

Courtesy of D. Appleton & Company, New York

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER OF MARQUE TO THE PRIVATEER *HERALD*

On the 28th of December, 1797, Captain Silsbee sailed from Boston on the *Portland*, taking his brother William as second mate, prepared for a voyage to Europe and thence to India. While at Cadiz, he heard of the existence of the decrees of the French Government which made liable to condemnation every vessel, of whatever nation, on board of which might be found any article of production or manufacture in

Great Britain or any of its possessions. He thereupon disposed of part of his cargo, erased from his nautical instruments the name of the English maker, and put on shore some English coal which he had on board for fuel, as well as every book in the English language. He then cautioned his crew, all of whom, except the chief mate, were his fellow townsmen, to say (what was actually the truth) in case of capture and examination, that they did not board the ship until after the loading of the cargo had been completed and that they were entirely ignorant of the kind, quality, or origin of the articles of which the cargo was composed.

Five days after leaving Cadiz he was captured by a French privateer brig and taken into Malaga. His report contains this record: "We arrived early in the morning and found there a great number of American and other neutral vessels with the French flag displayed upon each and all of them—some of them had been condemned and others were under sequestration—none had been acquitted nor was any one of them subsequently acquitted, but every one of them condemned. After anchoring at Malaga, no boat other than that of the privateer was permitted to approach our ship, nor was I allowed to go on shore or to communicate with anyone there until late in the afternoon of the day of our arrival, when I was taken on shore and conducted, under a guard of French soldiers, directly to the office and house (both in the same building) of the French Consul, by whom, in the presence of the owner, the commander and other officers of the privateer, the papers appertaining to the ship and cargo were closely examined, and by whom I was minutely and in the most authoritative manner, interrogated relative to each and every article of merchandise on board the ship—where they were produced?—how and by whom imported into the United States?—how they came into the possession of the owner of my ship?—the quality, the colour, and even the shade of colour of some of the articles, and I was *commanded* by that mighty man (for at that time the 'French Consul' held the Spanish authorities of the place in as much subjection as he did his humblest domestic) to answer each and all his lengthy and precise interrogatories, in 'five words.' I assured him of my anxious desire not to prolong the investigation unnecessarily, especially as I considered my case to be too plain and clear a one to require any artifice to show it to be so; and I further assured him, that although I was in his power, I was not in such fear of that power as to deter me from the discharge of my duty, and of my whole duty to the owners of the property under my charge—flattering him, at the same time, with the profession that I could not but indulge a belief that my answers to any question which he might propound to me, touching my cargo, would be such as to satisfy him of the injustice of my detention, and induce him to accord to me an immediate acquittal; but that the *length* of those answers must be measured by me, and not by him; and that they would be adapted to my own purpose, rather than to his.

"The examination was closed and the record of it placed, with the ship's papers, on one of the shelves of the consular office with similar

papers appertaining to thirty or forty other vessels then under sequestration at about 11 o'clock at night, when I was informed that I might return to my ship, in charge of the same guard which brought me on shore. I then asked the Consul when I might expect his decision upon my case—he said the decision must be 'in turn'—I asked him when that *turn* would, probably, take place—that, he said, was uncertain as there were many cases before mine (pointing at the same time to numerous files of papers appertaining to those cases) which would require *possibly* two or three months, but certainly not less than one month and that mine could not be decided short of that time. I expressed my surprise that a case so plain, and so clear as mine was, could not be decided in one day or even in one hour, as correctly as in a longer time, and after some disputation upon that point, I told the Consul that I would not leave his office, unless taken from thence by force, until his decision was made. Toward midnight the Consul and his clerk, together with the owner and officers of the privateer, went out of the office, leaving me there in charge of two porters and a watchman, with whom I remained during the night and saw nothing more of the Consul until about nine o'clock next morning when, on entering the office and expressing some surprise at finding me there, he asked me if I would give him a written order to my officers directing them and the crew to assist in unstowing such parts of the cargo as would enable a survey, which he would immediately appoint, to make such an examination of the various articles composing the cargo as to enable them to report to him what countries or colonies they were the production of. I complied with his request, intimating to him at the same time that I presumed *his* survey would not be disposed, whatever might be *their opinions*, to make any other report than such as they knew would be acceptable to him. I remained in the consular office, without having once left the room from my first entrance into it, until about four o'clock in the afternoon, which was about twenty-four hours after I landed from my ship.

"I then expressed a desire to see a notary public for the purpose of noting a protest, and was permitted, under a guard, to visit a notary whose office was but a few doors from the residence of the Consul, and after transacting my business with him returned in half an hour, to the Consul's office. Shortly after my return the Consul read to me the report of his survey, which declared every article of the cargo to be the products of British Colonies—and then asked me what I had to say to that report? I replied that it was such as I expected it would be; and such, I presumed, as he knew it would be; and I added (with some emphasis) that I could not but entertain the hope that an individual exercising the high functions appertaining to his office, would not permit himself to be influenced by a report which, with other declarations equally untrue, proclaimed the article of 'Mace' (one amongst several kinds of spices on board my ship) to be the *product of a British Colony*. Nothing further was then said to me by the Consul and I sat uninterrupted in his office expecting to pass another night there, until towards nine o'clock in the evening when the owner, captain, and other

Kindness of F. S. Whitwell

FIVE AMERICAN SHIPS PROTECTING THEMSELVES FROM CAPTURE BY A FRENCH PRIVATEER IN 1800

From painting, by Captain Louis Brantz of the *Sphinx*, representing five American ships, the *Cleopatra*, *Perseverance*, *Herald*, *Grace* and *Sphinx*, on their way from India to New York, protecting themselves and the English East India Company packet *Cornwallis* from capture by the French privateer *La Gloire*. This painting was presented to Captain Silsbee of the *Herald* by Captain Brantz.

officers of the privateer (who had not been there during the day) came into the office, apparently summoned there by the Consul, who immediately held a private conference with them in one corner of the room for about half an hour, then went to his desk, wrote something, which he handed to the owner and officers of the privateer, and having obtained their signatures, in addition to his own to the paper which he had written, he handed it to me with my ship's papers, saying, 'These, Sir, are all your papers, with permission to go when and where you please'—he also handed me an order to the prizemaster and crew who were on board my ship, to leave her forthwith. I endeavored (and I believe successfully) to appear to meet that result as an expected event, but such was not the case, as I had entertained but little hope of quite so favorable a result. I had, however, determined not to leave the Consul's office, voluntarily, until my case was decided, if my strength enabled me to stay there so long; my feelings, on receiving such relief of body as well as of mind may, therefore, be more easily imagined than described. I was taken to my ship in one of the boats of the privateer (none of my own ship's company having been permitted to communicate with the shore) and on delivering the order to the prizemaster, he, with his crew, soon retired to the privateer, leaving me in the quiet possession of my ship and cargo. Although I had passed the preceding forty hours without a moment's sleep and without refreshment of any kind whatever, yet I should have put to sea without a moment's delay if the wind had been favorable, but it

was adverse, and I felt safer at anchor in port, than under sail with a head wind in that part of the Mediterranean, and therefore concluded to wait for a favorable change of wind. On the following morning I went on shore and called on several commercial houses to whom I had letters of introduction, and on the American Consul, none of whom had I previously been permitted to see, and none of whom could readily be made to believe that I had obtained a release and permission to proceed on my voyage until I showed them the written instrument of the French Consul, nor was the American Consul fully satisfied of the fact (as he informed me when I went to dine with him, on the same day) until he had seen the French Consul, who, in answer to the inquiry 'why he had acted so much more promptly in my case than in any other of the numerous American vessels then in port' replied to the American Consul, that he (the French Consul) yet believed my ship and cargo liable to condemnation under the late decrees of France; but that my account of the origin of the various articles composing my cargo had been so particular and so well connected and sustained that he had been induced to liberate it—he admitted, however, to the American Consul that my apparent determination not to leave his office until my case was decided, had not been without some effect upon the time and character of his decision."

After experiencing these hazards, Captain Silsbee decided to abandon his original plan to go to India and determined instead to take on a cargo of brandy from Spain and return at once to the United States. That all was not yet clear sailing for him is shown by the following:

"Shortly after my arrival at Genoa a French Army entered that place and after laying an embargo on all the vessels in port,commenced their operations of fitting from that port a part of the well-known expedition, under 'Buonaparte,' to Egypt—hiring such vessels as they could and taking into requisition such others as they wanted, for the transportation of their army. My ship being the best one in port and having superior accommodations, was selected and taken into requisition for the conveyance of the 'Staff of the Army,' and the French General who had the immediate and chief control of the operations at Genoa expressed much surprise that, instead of soliciting the release of my ship, as I most ardently did, I should not rather evince my gratitude for such an honor as would be conferred on me by the selection of my ship and crew for such a purpose.

"After two or three unsuccessful interviews with that officer, for the purpose of obtaining a release, I accidentally learned that it was found impracticable to procure a sufficient quantity of salt-provision for the use of the transports. Having taken with me from hence an ample supply of salt beef and pork for an India voyage, I had about forty barrels more than was requisite for my passage directly to America, which I caused to be immediately and privately conveyed to a place of deposit several miles from the City and then called again on the French General and asked him if he did not wish to purchase some salt-provisions—he answered affirmatively, and asked how much I

had and what price I expected for it; adding, 'You know it is in my power to take it at my own price.' I told him that he should have every barrel of it at his own price, or even without price if he would release my ship—that those were the terms, and the only terms on which he could or would have it. The General was excited by my proposition and angrily threatened, before I left, to take the provision into requisition, and to make me regret having insulted him with such a proposition in relation to it. Two days afterward the General sent an order for me to appear before him, which I did, when he demanded of me to 'inform him promptly' where my forty barrels of provisions were, intimating a doubt of my having it, as his officers had not been able to find it. I told the General, very frankly, that if the ship which I commanded belonged wholly to myself and the property of no other person had been confided to my charge, I might and probably should have felt not only willing but, perhaps, have been highly gratified to command the ship, which was to convey a part of the 'Staff of such an Army,' on such an expedition; but that the ship was not entirely my own; that a large part of the ship and of the proceeds of a valuable cargo belonged to other persons who had entrusted it to my charge, and that my sense of obligation to those individuals was such as to forbid my assuming any new duties until those due to them had been discharged by the termination of the voyage in which I was then engaged—that in accordance with those views of what I conceived to be my duty, I had already removed from my ship not only those and other articles of provision, but also every article of value, to a place of safety known only to myself and one other person—that I had done this with a hope of thereby obtaining the release of my ship, and, if disappointed in that hope, with a fixed and irrevocable determination to abandon my vessel to the authorities of the City, in which case all my officers and every individual of my crew would quit the vessel with me. That avowal from me was met by a threat from the General to *coerce* me not only to a delivery of the provision, but to the performance of any and every duty which he might assign to me—that not only the ship, but likewise her captain, officers and crew, had, he said, been placed under requisition by the French Republic; a requisition not to be frustrated he said, by any human being; and (for the purpose, I presume, of augmenting the force of those last words of the General) a subaltern officer who was present, added (with an enthusiasm which seemed to appertain to all the French officers), 'Yes, Sir, suppose God had one Ship here, and the Republic wanted it, he must give it.' The interview was terminated by a declaration from me that a release of the ship was the only price and the only means by which he could or would, by any act of mine, obtain possession of the provision; and I again left him. The following day a highly respectable merchant of Genoa, with whom I had transacted some business and at whose house I had met the French General, called on me with an invitation to accompany him to the residence of the General, who, in the presence of the merchant, gave his assurance that if I would put the provision

Kindness of Louis Bacon

PRIVATEER *DIOMEDE*, WAR OF 1812

Owned by John Crowninshield, this vessel was successful for a time, but was later captured by the British.

into the possession of that merchant I should receive the actual cost of it in America and the release of my ship—this arrangement was immediately carried into effect, and before the close of that day I was again in the full and quiet possession of my vessel, for which I felt wholly and exclusively indebted to the accidental circumstance of my being in possession of that otherwise trifling article of salt-provision; and I could not but consider that a more beneficial disposal of forty barrels of beef and pork had, probably, never been made than in this instance."

Captain Silsbee's records also show that in the autumn of 1799, during an interval on shore between voyages, he was one of the organizers of the famous East India Marine Society of Salem, and the first rules of the Society were drafted by him, as one of the committee appointed for that purpose.

ADVENTURES OF A SALEM PRIVATEERSMAN

Among the men who did so much to develop the commerce of Salem in the early days was David A. Neal, who was born on June 7, 1793, and whose descendants, including members of the Rantoul family, continue to take an interest in the affairs of that city and the neighboring communities. Incidentally, Neal Rantoul of Boston, a grandson of this Neal, received his name from him.

Neal had a taste of privateering life on board the schooner *Diomede*, which was owned by a member of one of Salem's best-known families—John Crowninshield. This vessel was of about one hundred and sixty tons, and was built after the model made by the owner himself. She was well armed, carrying one long gun on a circle forward and four small guns. In addition to this, her main hatchway was decked over and had three circles, mounted with twelve- and eighteen-pounders, between the masts.

There was delay in putting to sea owing to the fact that some British men-of-war blockaded the harbor for several days. She was able to set sail, however, on the 9th of February, 1814, with a complement of 67 men, with Captain Crowninshield in command; David A. Neal, clerk; Samuel Briggs, first lieutenant; Richard Downing, second lieutenant; John Dumpsey, third lieutenant; and Joseph Preston, sailing master. The surgeon's name was Parsons, and the prize-masters were Joseph Strout, Samuel Upton, George Lafferty, Obed Hursey, Charles Leach and Thomas Cloutman.

The *Diomede* was very fast, as can be judged from the picture, and was able to outsail several British war vessels which she sighted and which would have proved troublesome to a slower craft. The first cruise lasted only a month, but was nevertheless a very successful one, yielding six prizes, mostly loaded with rum, sugar and cocoa. She was then refitted, and sailed on the 26th of April on her second cruise with practically the same officers. After capturing several prizes, she was taken by H. M. Brig of War *Rifleman*, which had chased her the day before but had been lost sight of in the night. The following morning, however, May 29, the *Diomede* in a thick fog fell in with her again, so close to that it was impossible to escape, and the superior armament of the British vessel rendered resistance futile.

Kindness of the late Beverley Rantoul

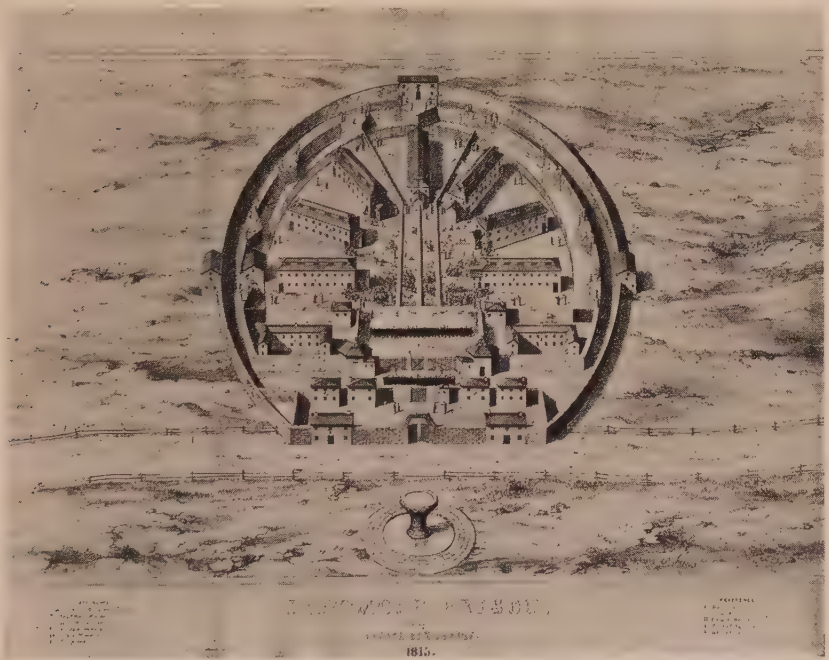
DAVID A. NEAL

Whose adventures on the *Diomede* and in Dartmoor Prison are related in the accompanying story.

Immediately after the surrender, all except the surgeon and a few of the men were transferred from the *Diomede* to the *Rifleman*. All their personal effects were delivered to them without search, and they were treated both by the Captain and the officers with great courtesy. The two vessels proceeded in company to Halifax, where they arrived on the 31st of May. The American vessel was too small to allow the officers, under the rules, to remain on parole, but an exception was made in favor of Captain Crowninshield in consideration of the kindness he had shown previously to prisoners taken by his vessel. All the rest of the captives were sent to Melville Island Prison on the 2d of June. Some of the officers hired a carriage and drove to their unwelcome destination, while the men were marched

there in a body. At this time all exchanges of prisoners between the two countries had been stopped so far as persons taken in ships of war and privateers were concerned, and the policy of Great Britain seemed to be to concentrate all such prisoners in one depot in England. On the 11th of July, therefore, Neal was included in a draft of about two hundred put aboard the transport ship *Benson* and ordered for England under convoy of the British man-of-war *Goliath*.

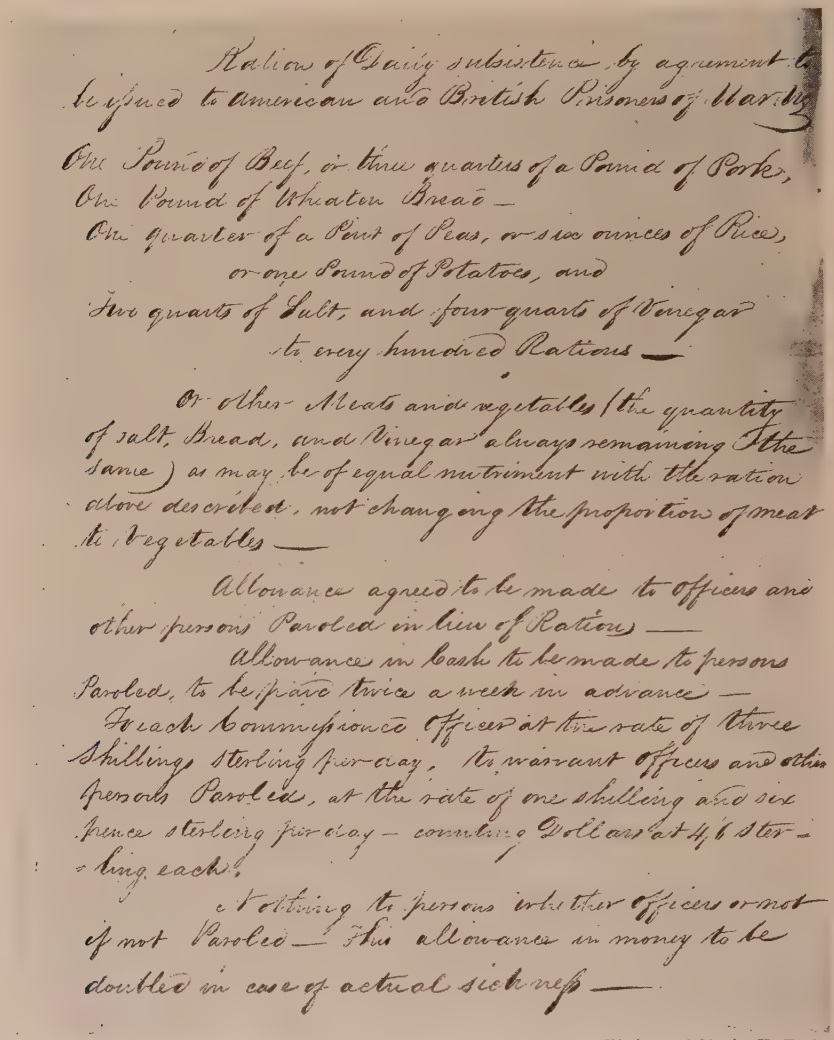
Since the ship's company of the *Benson* consisted of but thirty men, a detachment of twenty-five or thirty marines, under charge of two lieutenants, was on board to guard the prisoners. There were also about a dozen British naval officers returning home on furlough. It will, therefore, be seen that the captives greatly outnumbered the British. Counting on the thick fogs which prevailed at that season on the banks of Newfoundland, the prisoners decided to try to get possession of the ship, and accordingly on the 19th of July the attempt was made, but it proved unsuccessful. Neal received a shot from a carbine which shattered three of his fingers, rendering amputation necessary. As he was considered one of the ringleaders, he was removed to the *Goliath*, and at first was put into a black hole in the lowest part of the ship, where there was scarcely a breath of air and the



From a print in the possession of R. M. Eastman *Gift of Charles H. Taylor*

DARTMOOR PRISON, ENGLAND

Where so many captured privateersmen were imprisoned.



Ration of Daily subsistence by agreement to be issued to American and British Prisoners of War by

One Pound of Beef, or three quarters of a Pound of Pork,
One Pound of Wheaten Bread —
One quarter of a Pint of Peas, or six ounces of Rice,
or one Pound of Potatoes, and
Two quarts of Salt, and four quarts of Vinegar
to every hundred Rations —

Or other Meats and vegetables (the quantity of salt, Bread, and Vinegar always remaining the same) as may be of equal nutriment with the ration above described, not changing the proportion of meat to Vegetables —

Allowance agreed to be made to Officers and other persons Paroled in lieu of Ration —

Allowance in Cash to be made to persons Paroled, to be paid twice a week in advance —

To each Commissioned Officer at the rate of three Shillings Sterling per day, To warrant Officers and other persons Paroled, at the rate of one shilling and six pence sterling per day — counting Dollars at 4/6 Sterling each.

Nothing to persons whether Officers or not if not Paroled — This allowance in money to be doubled in case of actual sickness —

Kindness of Charles H. Taylor

COPY OF SCHEDULE OF DAILY RATIONS FOR PRISONERS OF WAR DURING THE WAR OF 1812

heat was excessive. It happened that the surgeon of the vessel was Barry O'Meara, who afterwards became so distinguished as the physician and defender of Napoleon at St. Helena. When O'Meara heard that one of the prisoners was wounded, he insisted that he should be sent to the sick bay and placed under his charge. This request was acceded to with bad grace by the Captain, who directed that two men

with cutlasses should be constantly stationed at the door with orders to cut the prisoner down at once if he tried to speak to anyone. After reaching port Neal was placed in a hospital at Gosport, to which he was accompanied by Dr. O'Meara, who saw that he had good quarters.

Later he was again put on board ship and taken to Plymouth, whence he was marched with other prisoners to Dartmoor Prison. At that time there were nearly six thousand Americans confined there, including some fifteen hundred or two thousand who had been discharged from the British navy. These latter had either been impressed from under the American flag or had other evidence of their nationality. As Captain Neal had funds available, he was permitted to purchase eatables at the prison market. On the whole, neither the provisions nor the treatment of the prisoners by the officials could be justly criticised. On account of the elevated position of the prison, the air was exhilarating, making appetites keen, so that only those persons suffered from lack of food who had nothing but the regular prison fare and the monthly allowance of 6*s*. 8*d*. each from the American Government. Early in January, 1815, the prisoners heard that a treaty of peace had been signed at Ghent, but it was not until the 31st of March that Neal heard from London that his discharge had been granted. On the following day he took his departure, the first American prisoner to be released from Dartmoor after the Treaty of Ghent.

The following description of Dartmoor was copied from "A Journal of a young man of Massachusetts, late a surgeon on Board an American Privateer, who was captured at sea by the British, in May, eighteen hundred and thirteen, and was confined first at Melville Island, Halifax, then at Chatham in England, and last, at Dartmoor Prison": "Certain it is, that the common people in this neighborhood were impressed with the notion that Dartmoor was a place less desirable to mortals, and more under the influence of evil spirits, than any other spot in England. I shall only say that I found it, take it all in all, a less disagreeable prison than the ships; the life of a prudent, industrious, well-behaved man might here be rendered pretty easy, for a prison life, as was the case with some of our own countrymen and some Frenchmen; but the young, the idle, the giddy, fun-making youth generally reaped such fruit as he sowed. A man with some money in his pocket might live pretty well through the day in Dartmoor Prison, there being shops and stalls where every little article could be obtained; but added to this we had a good and constant market, and the bread and meat supplied by government were not bad; and as good I presume as that given to British prisoners by our own government; had our lodgings and prison-house been equal to our food, I never should have complained. The establishment was blessed with a good man for a physician, named M'Grath, an Irishman, a tall lean gentleman with one eye, but a warm and good heart. We never shall cease to admire his disposition, nor forget his humanity."

From a painting by Thos. Birch *Kindness of F. B. Crowninshield*

PRIVATEER *AMERICA* OF SALEM

One of the most famous and successful of Salem privateers, owned by George Crowninshield & Sons.

Captain Neal's training on board a privateersman stood him in good stead some time later while voyaging to England, for he was called upon to take charge of the vessel when the skipper became so intoxicated that he was unable to navigate the craft properly.

After leaving the sea, Neal became a successful railroad organizer and developer, and was one of the prime movers in the organization of the old Eastern Railroad, of which he later became president. This is now part of the Boston and Maine system. While president of this New England railroad, though quite stubbornly opposed by his board of directors, he put through the opening of the Gloucester branch line, which later proved to be a very lucrative part of the system. This line assisted very materially in the development of the North Shore as we know it today. He also was interested in railroad extension in the West.

THE *AMERICA* OF SALEM

The largest, fastest, most successful and probably the most famous of all the privateers sailing out of Salem Harbor was the *America*, which is shown as one of the so-called "Lamp-Shade Fleet" in the main banking room of the State Street Trust Company.

Built for a merchantman in 1803–4 by the noted Retire Becket,

she made several profitable voyages between the time of her launching and her first cruise as a privateer in 1812. In that year her upper deck was taken off, her sides filled in solid like those of a frigate, and longer yards substituted, with royal-masts and a flying jib-boom. Spreading an enormous area of canvas, she required a large crew, her complement ranging from 142 to 168 men in all, of which 20 were marines. In action it was said that her deck and rigging swarmed like a wasp's nest. Her armament consisted of 18 long nine-pounders and 2 eighteen-pound carronades. During the War of 1812, she captured 26 prizes, and the valuables taken and brought safely into port realized $1,100,000, while the amount of property she destroyed at sea would bring the total damage to a much larger figure. It can easily be seen that she proved to be a veritable gold mine to her owners, George Crowninshield and Sons, a firm which brought fame as well as fortune to the port of Salem. Captain Benjamin Crowninshield of this house had been engaged in a previous war, having fought in the battle of Bunker Hill, so he naturally took a great interest in the adventures of the *America*.

It was the good fortune of this vessel to be commanded by very able captains, to which circumstance, doubtless, was largely due her uniform success. On her first cruise as a privateer she was commanded by Joseph Ropes, one of the best known "sea dogs" of his day. His father, Captain David Ropes, who was killed off Halifax in a bloody action on the *Jack*, was a Revolutionary privateersman, and a kinsman of Nathaniel Hawthorne and of Nathaniel Bowditch. The other officers and the members of the crew of the *America* were neighbors, and came from the best Salem families; it is of special interest to note that they sailed as a joint stock company and paid no wages. Tradition says that the only thing in the world that Captain Ropes feared was reproof from his mother. She hated the sea and had reason for so doing, as her husband had lost his life upon it. Young Joseph, therefore, was obliged to run away on his first voyage when he was little past the spankable age. Before he dared return home and face his mother's sorrowing indignation, he was careful to have a peace offering in the form of a barrel of molasses sent to her with his compliments.

Captain Ropes was one of those commanders who believed that fighting was not a happy-go-lucky operation, but a science which, by constant practice, could be reduced to nice perfection. He therefore employed much of his spare time between chases in exercising his men at the great guns and in rapid drills with small arms. Due to this training, the crew became organized like that of a man-of-war, and discipline similar to that in the navy was maintained.

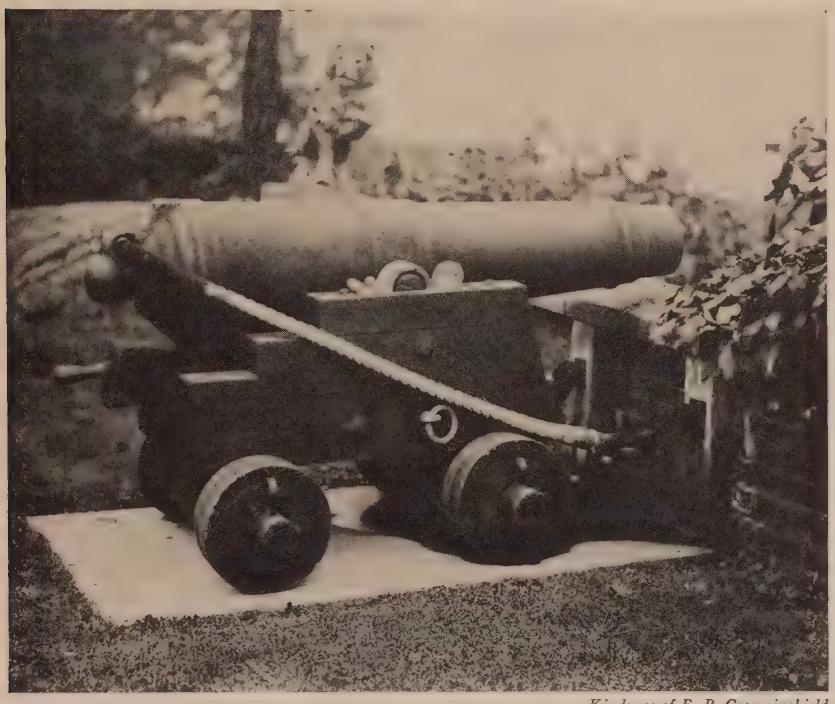
On January 7, 1813, the *America* returned to Salem, having completed a highly successful cruise of 122 days, during which six prizes were taken, valued at $158,000. John Kehew, who had been first lieutenant under Captain Ropes, was in command on her second cruise, during which ten prizes were taken, 130 prisoners paroled, and 30 more brought to port.

The next three voyages of the *America* were under command of James Chever, Jr., who at the age of twelve served on board as a cabin boy on her first trip to Mocha in 1804. Previous to taking command of this vessel, he had been a lieutenant on her second cruise as a privateer. He took naturally to his calling, as his father had been a lieutenant on the first *Grand Turk*, a Revolutionary privateer treated of in the next chapter, which succeeded in capturing a large cargo of military supplies intended for Cornwallis, diverting them to General Washington, to whom they were of great assistance in the successful siege of Yorktown.

As food played no small part in the physical vigor of a privateersman, most vessels of this class took care to see that there was a liberal allowance of beef in the diet of their crews. For instance, the bill of fare on the *America* was as follows: Monday, beef, pork and peas; Tuesday, beef and potatoes; Wednesday, lobscouse; Thursday, beef and pudding; Friday, beef, pork and beans; Saturday, salt fish. Lobscouse was a combination of meat, fish and ship biscuit served in the form of a stew. The allowance was: Sunday, 1 lb. flour, 1½ lb. beef, ½ gill molasses; Monday, ½ lb. beef, ½ lb. pork, ½ pint peas; Tuesday, 1½ lb. beef and potatoes; Wednesday, 1¼ lb. beef, ¼ lb. bread and potatoes; Thursday, 1 lb. flour, 1½ lb. beef, ½ gill molasses; Friday, ½ lb. beef, ½ lb. pork, ½ pint beans; Saturday, 1 lb. salt fish, ¼ lb. pork and potatoes. The allowance for each man was: 1 lb. of bread a day, ½ pint of spirit, 1 pint of coffee night and morning, and ½ pint of vinegar a week.

The officers of the *America* at this time were James Chever, Jr., captain; Ebenezer Meacom, first lieutenant; Benjamin Upton, second lieutenant; Nathan Green, third lieutenant; Doctor Page; Thorndike Proctor, clerk.

To give an idea of the varied cargoes revealed in the prizes taken, we quote the following newspaper account of the capture of the brig *Falcon* by the *America:* "Among the goods of the valuable prize brig *Falcon* sent into Bath by the *America* of Salem, were about 900 Bibles in the English and Dutch languages and 500 Testaments forwarded for distribution at the Cape of Good Hope by the British and Foreign Bible Society. The Messrs. Crowninshield, to whom the privateer belonged, permitted a purchase of them to be made by the Bible Society of Massachusetts at a price hardly sufficient to legalize the sale—say about 20 cents to the pound sterling. The conduct of those gentlemen is highly spoken of in the Eastern papers." It was our privilege, through the courtesy of Mr. Francis B. Crowninshield, to see the original letter, signed by Samuel Thacher, corresponding secretary of the Massachusetts Bible Society, expressing "the high sense which the Society entertains of this act of liberality so honourable in itself and which contrasts so very advantageously with the conduct of the captors of a quantity of Bibles under similar circumstances last year at Portland." The prize list of the *Thistle* revealed a rather comprehensive and curious assortment of linens, chintzes, women's shoes, pickles, tea, beads, medicines, wines, hats, muskets,



Kindness of F. B. Crowninshield

MARINE ORDNANCE OF A CENTURY AGO

Carronade used in the War of 1812 on the privateer *America* of Salem, owned by George Crowninshield & Sons. This relic is now mounted on the lawn of F. B. Crowninshield in Marblehead, Mass.

prunes, gun powder, six nests of trunks, etc. This vessel, by the way, had been recaptured March 19, 1815, while off Cape Sable, by the British sloop of war *Cossack*, but on being sent into Halifax she was restored to the Americans for the reason that her recapture had taken place after the time limit set by the treaty.

One of the *America's* prizes contained some ladies' clothes sent by a British officer to his wife in the West Indies. Mrs. Crowninshield described these articles in a letter to her husband, Benjamin W., who was in Washington in his capacity as Secretary of the Navy. He answered that he had mentioned this to Mr. Dallas, who was also in the Cabinet, and as a result Mrs. Dallas was very anxious to have some of them. Mr. Crowninshield sent a description of Mrs. Dallas's figure, comparing her to "Aunt Silsbee," who was the grandmother of Mr. Frederick S. Whitwell and the great-grandaunt of Mr. Charles Francis Adams and Mr. Francis B. Crowninshield. To the disappointment of Mrs. Dallas, it turned out, after all, that the clothes were too small for her.

Kindness of Robert E. Peabody

SALEM HARBOR IN 1790, SHOWING DERBY WHARF AT THE LEFT

The enterprise of her merchants and citizens made for Salem an enduring record in the early maritime annals of our country, and her ships and seamen became known in practically every port of the world.

Kindness of F. B. Crowninshield

PRIVATEER *AMERICA* OF SALEM

Escaping from a British frigate, January 23, 1815. It will be noticed that men are pouring water on the sails, which was a method resorted to in calm weather to take the greatest advantage of any breeze stirring, as it made the sails draw better.

Benjamin W. Crowninshield, from whose correspondence we gleaned this story, was born in Boston in 1772 and died here in 1851. He was a State Senator, 1810–13, and again 1822–3. On December 7, 1814, he was appointed Secretary of the Navy by President Madison, being retained by President Monroe when he made up his Cabinet in 1817. His resignation took place in 1818. He served as a Democratic representative of the Salem District in the 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st Congresses, 1823–31, but was defeated by Rufus Choate in the contest of 1830 for the 22d Congress.

Years after the war, Captain Chever, while in command of a merchant vessel, chanced to meet in Valparaiso Harbor Sir James Thompson, captain of the British frigate *Dublin*, which had been fitted out with the special object of capturing the *America* in 1813. Thompson told of his experience in close quarters, only to be foiled in his attempt to capture her. He finished up one of his stories by saying, "I wonder if you know who it was commanded the *America* on that cruise?" Captain Chever was perfectly willing to answer this easy question, and his former foeman heartily enjoyed the singular coincidence of this friendly meeting.

Under Captain Chever, the *America* took numerous prizes, two of the cruises being especially successful, the value of his captures running

to nearly a million dollars. The exceptional sailing qualities of this vessel were a great aid to her successes, and it was said that she was never outsailed while testing her speed against the fleetest, often maintaining the rate of 13 knots for hours and frequently averaging more than 10 knots for twelve consecutive hours.

After the war, she lay rotting at the dock from which she had been launched under the eyes of George Crowninshield, Jr., and in the year 1831 was broken up for the old metal in her. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

PRIVATEER SHIP *GRAND TURK*

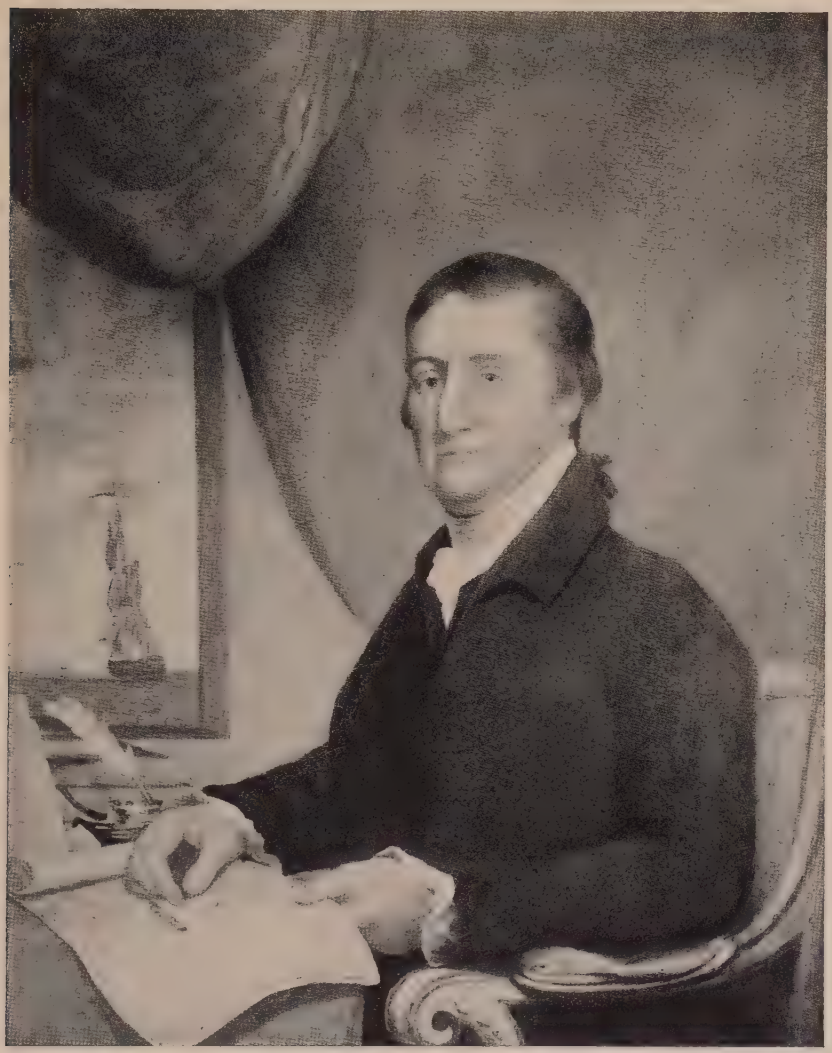
The privateer *Grand Turk* was built in 1781 by Thomas Barstow at his Two Oaks Yard in Hanover, Massachusetts, for Elias Hasket Derby, the noted Salem merchant. It is interesting to note from existing records that she was largely paid for in goods, instead of money, two of the favorite mediums of trade being rum and butter.

Launched when privateering was at its height, she had little difficulty in obtaining a crew, as she was the largest and most strongly armed of any of the Salem privateers up to that time, being pierced for 28 guns and carrying comfortably a crew of 120 men. On June 13, of the year of her launching, a commission was issued to her to cruise against the enemies of the United States under the command of Captain Thomas Simmons. Her first voyage was successful, but few details are recorded.

On her second cruise she was under the command of Captain Joseph Pratt, and her destination was the south coast of Ireland. Their first prize was captured so near shore that they were able to order the crew to take to their boats and row for land. Several other prizes were taken, so that this cruise not only probably paid the cost of building and fitting out the ship, but was also the means of setting up many of her crew in comfortable circumstances.

On her fourth cruise, also under the same command, she captured the British ship *Pompey*, 400 tons, which carried 20 guns and which was loaded with a valuable cargo of provisions. Much to the surprise of Captain Pratt, no resistance was made, due to the fact that when the *Pompey* sailed from London on February 11, the preliminaries of peace had been signed, and therefore her captain did not fear capture. The *Pompey* was, nevertheless, considered a fair prize and was sold to George Crowninshield of Salem, who renamed her *America*, being the first of three vessels of that name to be owned by that well-known Salem family.

On April 30, 1783, the *Grand Turk* ended her career as a privateer when she dropped anchor in Salem Harbor after her fourth cruise. In the short period of one year and ten months, she had captured no less than 16 enemy vessels and, as all her prizes came safely to port, she added materially to the wealth of the new country at the expense of the old. While he had aided his country's cause by capturing enemy vessels, Derby had, at the same time, amassed a very considerable fortune of his own.



Kindness of Robert E. Peabody

ELIAS HASKET DERBY

One of the best-known shipping men of Salem when that port was one of the busiest in America.

After hostilities ceased, the *Grand Turk* was transformed into a peaceful merchantman and sailed on September 24, 1783, with a full cargo to the West Indies under command of Captain Samuel Williams. This proved to be a successful venture, and prompted her owner to send her on a second voyage to the same islands under Captain Silsbee. In 1784 she sailed under Captain Jonathan Ingersoll to the Cape of

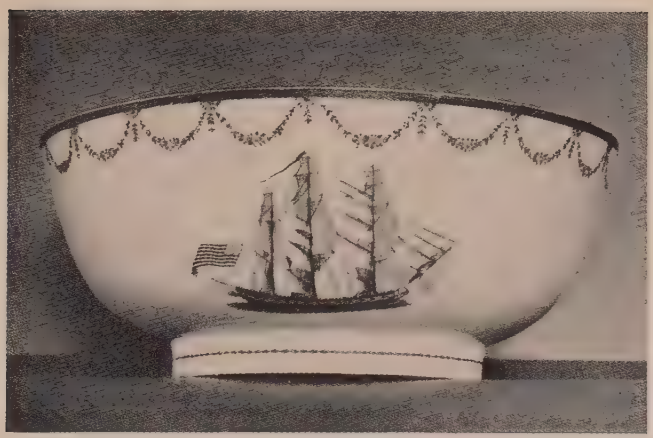
From a painting in the President's office of the State Street Trust Company

PRIVATEER *GRAND TURK* OF SALEM

Built in 1781 for Elias Hasket Derby. She captured the *Pompey*, which later became the *America*, the first of that name. After the Revolution, in November, 1784, the *Grand Turk* was sent by Mr. Derby to the Cape of Good Hope. Soon after her return on November 28, 1785, the *Grand Turk* cleared for Île de France, and touching at that place pushed on to Canton, being the first vessel from New England to visit China. She left Salem in December, 1787, and went to the Île de France, where she was sold in 1788.

Good Hope, where most of her cargo was disposed of, then visited the Island of St. Helena, at that time a port of considerable importance, though now famous principally on account of Napoleon's exile there later. Here she displayed the first American flag ever seen by the inhabitants. Later at Grenada arrangements were made for a return cargo that proved so profitable that Mr. Derby decided to send his good ship farther afield. Thus it came about that she was despatched on December 3, 1785, under Captain Ebenezer West, to the Île de France, or Mauritius, as it is now called, later pushing on to Canton, where she had the honor of being the first vessel from New England and the third from America to reach China. A souvenir of this pioneer voyage is preserved in the Marine Room of the Peabody Museum at Salem in the form of a large China bowl decorated with a painting of the *Grand Turk*. This was presented to Captain West by Pinqua, the Chinese Hong merchant who handled affairs for the vessel during her stay of several months at the Chinese port.

The *Grand Turk* left Salem in December, 1787, for the Île de France,



Kindness of Robert E. Peabody

THE *GRAND TURK* PUNCH BOWL

A gift to the owners by Pinqua, one of the famous Hong merchants of China, through whom the ship's business was transacted, as a souvenir of the visit of the *Grand Turk* to China in 1786. This bowl is preserved in the Marine Room of the Peabody Museum at Salem.

Kindness of Robert E. Peabody

THE ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN THE PRIVATEER *GRAND TURK* AND THE BRITISH MAIL PACKET *HINCHINBROKE*, MAY 1, 1814

where she was sold in 1788 to a French merchant, and thus passed from the early American shipping annals to which she had brought so much credit.

PRIVATEER BRIG *GRAND TURK*

The brig *Grand Turk* of 309 tons, built at Wiscasset, Maine, in 1812, was bought in September of that year by a group of thirty men, most of whom hailed from Salem, although the records show that one of the owners was Thomas Williams of Marblehead and another was Peter Paul F. de Grand of Boston. She had been brought from Wiscasset to Boston for sale, and her new owners had her sent to Salem to be fitted out for her first privateering cruise.

After her 18 guns had been mounted, stores loaded, and a crew of 95 men signed on, she set sail under command of Captain Holton J. Breed, bearing a commission signed by President Madison. This first cruise lasted one hundred days and resulted in several captures. She was forced to terminate the voyage at Portland, Maine, as she was intercepted outside of Salem Harbor by two British frigates while making for her home port. That such interference sometimes had its bright side is shown by the story told of a Beverly fishing schooner which in April, 1813, while the British frigates *Shannon* and *Tenedos* were keeping close watch of Salem Harbor, was overhauled and all her cargo of fish purchased at top market prices. In addition, her keg was filled with good Jamaica rum, and she was sent on her

Kindness of Robert E. Peabody

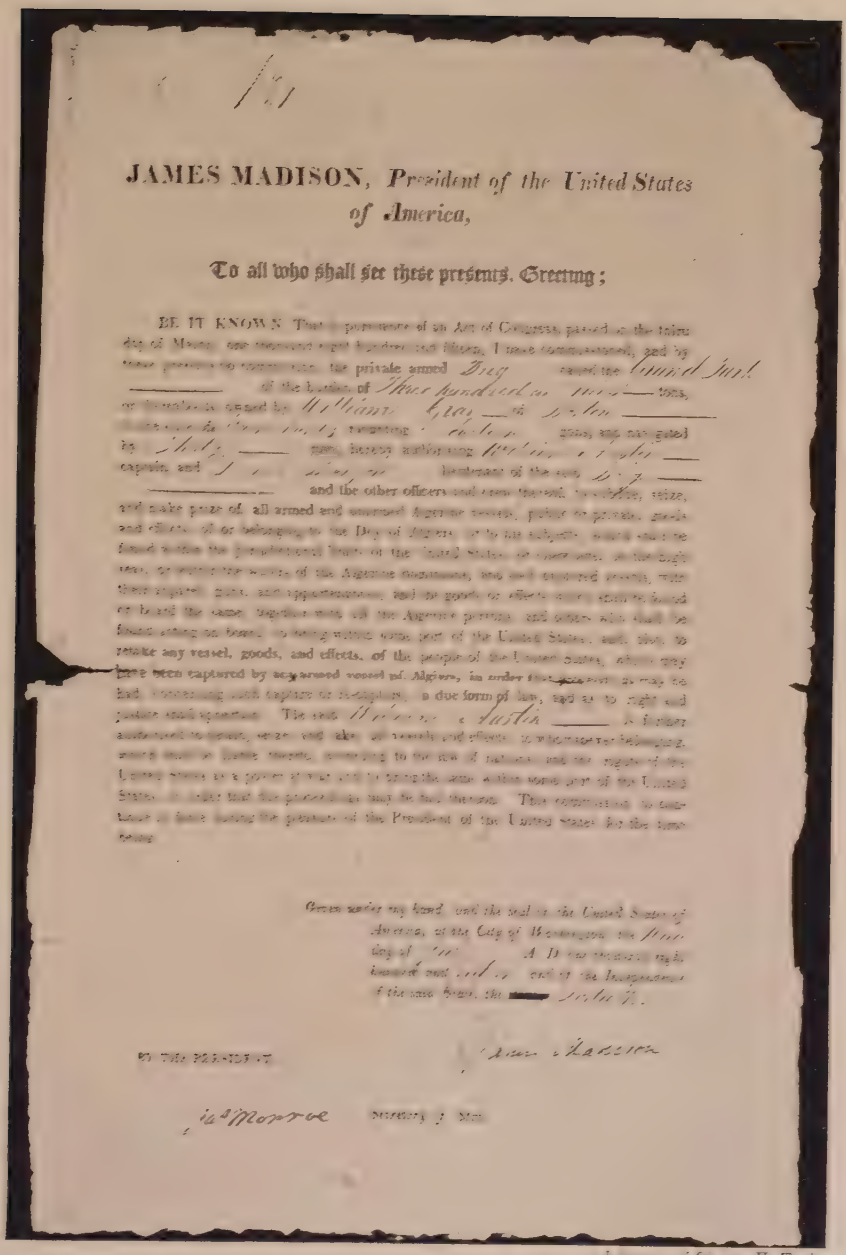
PRIVATEER BRIG *GRAND TURK*

Of 14 guns, Wm. Austin, Commander, saluting Marseilles.

homeward way. After remaining a few days in Portland, the *Grand Turk* was able to leave for Salem, where she arrived on June 6, 1813. When off Cape Ann that morning, according to Felt's Annals of Salem she was boarded by a person from Cape Ann who supposed her to be an English cruiser and who gave full information of American vessels about to arrive, at the same time offering also supplies of provisions. Captain Breed thereupon gave him a heavy dose of tartar emetic and jalap in a glass of grog to cure his disposition for treason.

Four months later, the *Grand Turk* set forth on her second cruise under the same command and sailed for the enemy's waters off the coast of Ireland. This voyage lasted ninety-four days, resulting in the capture of seven prizes, four of which were manned, two burned, and one used as a cartel for prisoners. Her third cruise was begun on February 17 of the following year. After taking several prizes, one of which was recaptured by the British and taken a second time by the *Grand Turk*, the subject of this story became involved in the most serious battle of her career. A strange sail was discovered on May 2 and the *Grand Turk* immediately gave chase. When within two miles of her quarry, the American vessel, using a trick of the time, hoisted English colors, which were hauled down when within musket-shot of the enemy, and American colors raised in their place. The stranger thereupon flew an English ensign and began to fire at the *Grand Turk*. For about an hour and a half the two vessels kept up a steady fire, until the Salem ship became unmanageable. While attempting to repair some of the damage, the enemy, which proved to be the *Hinchinbroke*, a British mail packet, succeeded in escaping, though badly cut up. The *Grand Turk* lost two men in this action. In spite of the fact that she was seriously damaged, she finished up her last voyage under Captain Breed with property on board valued at $65,000, which she had taken from prizes during a cruise of 108 days.

After a thorough overhauling, she set sail under Captain Nathan Green on August 6. After capturing a few small prizes, she encountered a Tartar in the form of a predecessor of the famous "Q" ships of the World War. While off the coast of Cornwall, she engaged a ship flying English colors. After firing a few broadsides and getting closer, it was discovered that the stranger was a heavy sloop-of-war, though well disguised by having her gun deck ports shut and showing a tier of ports on painted canvas above her channels. When this discovery was made, no time was lost in getting away and, thanks to her greater speed, the *Grand Turk* was once more free to pursue her course to safer and more profitable waters. Captain Green took several prizes off the coast of Spain, and then started for home, as his supplies were running short and his crew had become so depleted by the number of prizes he had manned that he could spare no more for this purpose. With a cruise of 103 days behind her, the *Grand Turk* anchored at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, with 50 prisoners on board, but only 44 of her original crew of 120 men. More vessels were captured on this cruise than on any other she made. An interesting custom of the time (War of 1812) was the insertion in the newspapers



JAMES MADISON, *President of the United States of America,*

To all who shall see these presents, Greeting;

BE IT KNOWN That in pursuance of an Act of Congress, passed on the [illegible] day of March one thousand eight hundred and eleven, I have commissioned, and by these presents do commission the private armed Brig named the Grand Turk of the burthen of three hundred and [illegible] tons, or thereabouts, owned by William Gray of Boston [illegible] mounting [illegible] guns, and navigated by [illegible] men, hereby authorizing William [illegible] captain, and [illegible] lieutenant of the said Brig [illegible] and the other officers and crew thereof, to subdue, seize, and take prize of all armed and unarmed Algerine vessels, public or private, goods and effects of or belonging to the Dey of Algiers or to his subjects, which shall be found within the jurisdictional limits of the United States or elsewhere, on the high seas, or within the waters of the Algerine dominions, and said captured vessels, with their cargoes, goods, and appurtenances, and the goods or effects which shall be found on board the same, together with all the Algerine persons and others which shall be found acting on board, to bring within some port of the United States, and there to retake any vessel, goods, and effects, of the people of the United States, whose they have been captured by any armed vessel of Algiers, in order that proceedings may be had concerning such captures or recaptures, a due forfeiture of law, and as to right and justice shall appertain. The said William [illegible] Austin [illegible] is further authorized to detain, seize and take all vessels and effects of whomsoever belonging, armed and unarmed, according to the law of nations and the usages of the United States in time of war, and to bring the same within some port of the United States, in order that due proceedings may be had thereon. This commission to continue in force during the pleasure of the President of the United States for the time being.

Given under my hand, and the seal of the United States of America, at the City of Washington, the [illegible] day of [illegible] A D one thousand eight hundred and [illegible] and of the Independence of the said States, the [illegible]

James Madison

BY THE PRESIDENT

[illegible]

Jas Monroe Secretary of State

Instrument of Course: H. Taylor

COMMISSION ISSUED TO PRIVATEER BRIG *GRAND TURK* OF BOSTON (FORMERLY OF SALEM) BY PRESIDENT JAMES MADISON

From an old print now hanging in one of the large coupon rooms of the State Street Trust Company

AN EARLY VIEW OF PORTLAND, MAINE

This port was much frequented by privateers.

of cards of thanks by officers and men who had been captured, and who in this way expressed their appreciation of the kind treatment accorded them as prisoners. One of the *Grand Turk's* prizes was retaken by the British and ordered to Halifax, but before she could reach that port she was again taken by another Salem privateer, the *Surprise*, and brought to that port. It was certainly a surprise to Captain Green to find on his return that his prize belonged to another!

Captain Green had a much pleasanter surprise on his next cruise, which started on the first day of the New Year. When off Pernambuco the British ship *Active Jane* of Liverpool was taken, but apparently had nothing of value aboard. However, in the process of transferring a few kegs marked "Nails 1½" " one of them broke open, and to the astonishment of the privateersmen a shower of coins rolled out on the deck. It turned out that each of the fourteen kegs contained a thousand milreis, the total being the equivalent of about $17,000 at the current rate of exchange. On March 10 the *Grand Turk* came perilously near capture herself when a British frigate decoyed her too close for her well-being. It was only by dint of strenuous work at the sweeps that she escaped.

A week or so later, Captain Green discovered among the papers taken from a captured prize a letter stating that peace between England and the United States had been signed at Ghent on Christmas Eve, and had later been ratified by the Prince Regent, but that hostilities would not cease until the treaty was also ratified by the American Government. The *Grand Turk* had sailed from Salem a week after the treaty had been signed at Ghent, so Captain Green thought it wise to abandon the cruise. On the way home, he fell in with an American schooner from Alexandria, Virginia, and learned the pleasing news that the war was over.

This ended the *Grand Turk's* career as a privateer. She was unquestionably one of the most successful private armed ships of the war, having captured no less than 30 enemy vessels. It is no doubt true that her depredations on British commerce, in conjunction with the activities of other American privateers, did much to hasten the cessation of hostilities. Her owners decided to dissolve their partnership, which had been formed for the sole purpose of operating a privateer, and the *Grand Turk* was then sold to the Honorable William Gray of Boston, one of the leading American shipowners of the day, who later disposed of her "to a Spaniard in Havanna, 27 January, 1816," to quote from the records at the Boston Custom House.

CAPTAIN SILAS TALBOT

"Talk about your clipper ships, clipper ships, clipper ships,
Talk about your barquentines, with all their spars so fancy;
I'll just take a sloop-o'-war with Talbot, with Talbot (Si Talbot),
An' whip 'em all into 'er chip, and just to suit my fancy.

So heave away for Talbot, for Talbot, for Talbot,
So heave away for Talbot, an' let th' Capting steer;
For he's the boy to smack them, to crack them, to whack them,
For he's the boy to ship with, if you want to privateer."

From "BALLADS OF RHODE ISLAND," 1782

Few privateersmen of the Revolution had a more distinguished career than Silas Talbot. Born of poor parents in Dighton, Massachusetts, this young lad, at the age of twelve, shipped in a small coasting vessel as a cabin boy, and rapidly rose in his calling, until, in 1772, when twenty-one years old, he had accumulated enough money to build for himself a house in Providence, Rhode Island. On June 28, 1775, he was commissioned captain in a Rhode Island regiment, and took part in the operations before Boston which led to the evacuation of that place by the British on March 17, 1776. While on his way to New York with the American army, Talbot stopped at New London, at which port Captain Esek Hopkins had just arrived after his successful expedition to the Bahamas. The latter applied to Washington for two hundred volunteers to assist his squadron in reaching Providence, and Talbot was one of the first to offer himself. He proceeded in the squadron to the desired haven, and then rejoined the army before New York.

At that time, several fire ships were in course of construction, which, it was hoped, would destroy some of the vessels of the enemy fleet then at anchor near New York. When these vessels were nearly ready, Captain Talbot applied for and was placed in command of one of them. After Washington retreated to Harlem Heights, the British fleet moved up the Hudson River, the American fire ships keeping just ahead of them and anchoring above Fort Washington. Here they remained three days, whereupon Talbot received a letter from Major Anderson directing him to take the first opportunity to destroy the enemy vessels, three of which lay at anchor seven miles above the city to assist the land forces in turning the right wing of the American army.

The following night proving fair, Captain Talbot, about two o'clock in the morning, weighed anchor, and, standing toward one of the ships, spread fresh priming on all the trains leading to the fire barrels and sprinkled quantities of turpentine over the combustible material that had been placed aboard. It was intended to set fire to this mass from the cabin, but in order that the flames might spread more readily, Talbot prevailed upon one of his men named Priestly—an expert swimmer—to lie down on the forecastle with a lighted match so as to fire the trains the instant they fouled the enemy's ship. Selecting

the largest of the three vessels, the 64-gun ship of the line *Asia*, Talbot availed himself of the darkest hour, just before daylight, and moved directly upon her. The British were found to be on the alert, and when the approaching fire ship was still some distance off, a boy aboard the *Asia* discovered her and gave the alarm. The enemy promptly opened a rapid fire, but, although several shots passed through the American vessel, no serious damage was done. In a few minutes the two antagonists fouled, whereupon matches were applied to the fore and aft trains on the American craft at the same instant. So rapid was the progress of the flames that they burst forth from all sides. Talbot himself was compelled to grope around in the fire, and received severe burns before he found the sally port through which he and his men were to escape. The brave Priestly, who had undertaken the perilous task of giving direct fire to the trains, was compelled to jump overboard, but was rescued by a boat.

Naturally, the greatest confusion prevailed aboard the *Asia*. Her guns were fired, while boats from the other British war craft put off to her assistance and to intercept the daring adventurers. The brilliant flames from the fire ship soon illuminated the river for miles, rendering the little boat containing the Americans a fair target. All the English vessels opened on her with round and grape shot, but owing to the excitement of the moment only two small balls passed through the frail craft. After great efforts the British succeeded in extinguishing the flames, but the enterprise had made such an impression upon their commanders that they immediately slipped their cables, and, falling down the river, anchored below New York. Talbot and his men reached the New Jersey shore in safety, but the Captain was so burned and blistered by the fire as to be temporarily blinded, necessitating his being led by his men through the woods to "English Neighborhood." Accommodations were solicited for him there at several houses, but to no purpose, the people alleging usually that his appearance was so horrible he would frighten their children. At last a poor widow, who lived in a small log hut consisting of only one room, took him in, where he was laid on the floor and covered with a blanket, his hostess then procuring for him every aid in her power. During the course of the day, General Knox and Dr. Eustis, passing that way and hearing of his distressing situation—for he was at that time still deprived of his sight—called in to see him, and the doctor gave directions for more effective treatment. When the captain was somewhat recovered he left this poor but hospitable abode and went to Hackensack, where he remained until he was able to join his regiment. For this gallant undertaking Congress promoted him to the rank of Major.

In the British attack in November, 1777, on Fort Mifflin, where Talbot was stationed, he received a musket ball through his left wrist. Notwithstanding the excruciating pain, he continued at his post with a handkerchief tied round the injured part. Soon afterward a ball penetrated his hip, and, then being totally disabled, the brave officer was placed in a boat and transferred to Red Bank, and thence to the

hospital at Princeton. Receiving permission from General Washington to return to his home in Rhode Island until his wounds were healed, he proceeded to Providence.

In the campaign of 1778 a French fleet, under Count d'Estaing, appeared off the American coast, and an expedition was planned to drive the British out of Rhode Island. In this effort the Americans were commanded by General Sullivan, while the English garrison was under the orders of Sir Robert Pigot. The first step to be taken by the Americans was to construct a large number of flat-bottomed boats, in which the army could be transferred from the mainland to Rhode Island. Major Talbot was ordered to superintend this work, and in a short time had eighty-six boats in readiness, sixteen of which were built in one day and calked by candlelight in an open field the following night. Major Talbot, by the middle of the night, had everything in readiness for the next morning; and then, being worn out with fatigue and want of rest for several days, he laid down under one of the boats, and slept soundly, notwithstanding the fact that the calkers worked over his head part of the time in order to finish the boat. The embarkation of the American army began on August 9, and after gaining the island the troops began their march southward toward the British garrison at Newport. Being ordered to ride ahead so as to reconnoiter, our gallant Major came in sight of the enemy's fort, when he discovered three British artillerymen in a garden foraging. He leaped his horse over the wall and threatened the men with instant death if they attempted to move. The soldiers, mistaking Talbot for a British officer, began apologizing for their absence and begged that they might not be punished, diplomatically offering to share their forage with him. Taking their side arms, Talbot marched them up the road before him into the American lines.

Owing to the failure of the French fleet to coöperate with the Americans, the attack on Newport was not made, and on August 28 our army began its retreat to the mainland. When the French ships first appeared off Newport, July 25, the enemy burned several of their men-of-war and sank the frigate *Flora*, at that time heaved down on the beach for cleaning. This step opened to the Americans the water passages on each side of Rhode Island, which was of inestimable advantage. With a view of again closing these channels, the British, after the departure of the French vessels for Boston, converted a stout brig of some two hundred tons into a galley. Her upper deck was removed, and on the lower deck eight 12-pounders from the *Flora* were mounted, besides ten swivels, and, being provided with strong boarding nettings and manned by 45 men, she became a formidable auxiliary to the British land forces. This craft, named in honor of the British commanding general, Sir Robert Pigot, was placed in charge of Lieutenant Dunlop, of the British navy, and on taking station in the eastern passage succeeded in completely interrupting the important commerce carried on through that channel.

Determined to capture or destroy this troublesome vessel, Talbot early in October obtained General Sullivan's permission to fit out a

From "A History of American Privateers" by Edgar S. Maclay, A.M. *Courtesy of D. Appleton & Company, New York*

SCENE OF CAPTAIN TALBOT'S CRUISES

craft and to call for volunteers. The small coasting schooner *Hawk*, of seventy tons, was secured, and in two days was prepared for the enterprise with two 3-pounders and 60 men, Lieutenant Baker serving as second in command. These daring men promptly made sail, and had proceeded about eight miles below Providence when the wind failed, so that they were obliged to remain at anchor all that night and the following day. In order to reach the *Pigot*, Talbot was compelled to run past two British earthworks, one of which was erected on the south side of the passage at Bristol Ferry, while the other was on the west side of Fogland Ferry, the channel opposite these batteries being about three-quarters of a mile wide.

On the following night, Talbot, favored with a good breeze, got under way, and, by keeping as near as possible to the opposite shore, passed the fort at Bristol Ferry. He was discovered and fired upon, but fortunately all the enemy's missiles fell wide of the *Hawk*, and she ran about six miles up Taunton River, anchoring on the west side of Mount Hope Bay, some fifteen miles from the *Pigot*, the direction of the wind at that time rendering it impracticable to approach Fogland

THE HARBOR OF ST. GEORGE'S, GRENADA

Kindness of Robert E. Peabody

Visited in 1785 by the ship *Grand Turk*, under command of Captain Jonathan Ingersoll, an ancestor of the president of the State Street Trust Company.

Ferry. As the breeze failed to serve on the following morning, Talbot, leaving Baker in charge of the *Hawk*, proceeded in his boat to the east side of Sakonnet River. He landed alone, and securing a horse rode down the shore to a point opposite the galley, where with a good glass he reconnoitered her at his leisure. This intrepid officer soon discovered that she was a far more formidable craft than he had been led to believe; her boarding nettings were very high and almost encircled the hull, making it exceedingly difficult to take her by boarding—the main reliance of the Americans in the proposed attack. Yet, in spite of the unexpected difficulties involved in the attempt, Talbot determined to move against the *Pigot* that evening. Returning to the *Hawk* he asked for and received from Brigadier-General Cornell a reënforcement of fifteen men under Lieutenant Helm, of Rhode Island. When all hands had gone aboard, Major Talbot called them together, and for the first time fully explained his plans for taking the *Pigot*, concluding his remarks with an exhortation to keep cool, and offering a considerable personal reward for the man who first gained the galley's deck. The men responded to the harangue with cheers, and promptly at nine o'clock the *Hawk* got under way and proceeded down the river.

In making his preparations for the attack, Talbot showed true Yankee ingenuity by lashing a kedge anchor fast to the end of his jib boom, so that when the *Hawk* ran against the *Pigot* the kedge would tear a wide opening in the nettings. A grapnel also was held in readiness to throw aboard the enemy, so as to hold the vessels together. As the Americans approached the fort at Fogland Ferry, Talbot lowered his sails so that the *Hawk* would drift past under bare poles, thereby reducing the chances of detection. On the successful passage of this fort, undiscovered, largely depended the ultimate success of the enterprise, for the *Pigot* lay only four miles below, near Black Point, and would have been warned of the approaching danger by the sound of guns. So onward in the darkness glided the silent craft, with every sound hushed and every light carefully screened; and though she drew so near the earthworks as to enable her crew to distinguish clearly the sentinels every time they passed the light at the window of the barrack, she continued nevertheless on her way down stream undetected.

Having safely passed the fort, Talbot again set his sails, and stood swiftly down the river with all hands at quarters. Owing to possible overanxiety he did not gain a view of the *Pigot* as soon as he had expected. Fearing that he had passed her in the darkness, he came to anchor, and, getting into his boat, pulled with muffled oars down the stream in search of the enemy. He had not proceeded far when the galley suddenly loomed up directly ahead. To make absolutely sure of success this discreet officer, instead of exhibiting undue haste by pulling immediately back to his craft, moved closer to the *Pigot*, and, having satisfied himself as to how she rode with the tide and wind, returned to the *Hawk*. Getting his schooner under way again, Talbot bore directly down on the galley. Soon her dark outlines were

distinguished in the surrounding gloom, and almost at the same instant a challenge was heard across the water. The hail was repeated several times, and, as no answer was made, a small volley of musketry was delivered at the Americans, which occasioned little or no injury, as the crew had been ordered to lie down behind the bulwarks.

Before the British could discharge a single cannon the *Hawk* had fouled them, the kedge as expected tearing a great hole in the boarding nettings, while the grapnel, which was promptly swung aboard, held the two craft together. The Americans then rose, and, with a volley of small arms, followed Lieutenant Helm's lead in boarding the enemy. In a short time every antagonist was driven below except the gallant commander, Lieutenant Dunlop, who appeared on deck in his underclothing, and put up a desperate resistance. He was soon overpowered, however, and when informed that his craft had been taken by a small vessel carrying only two 3-pounders, manned exclusively by soldiers—though many of them had been seamen—he burst into tears, saying that he fancied himself to stand as fair for promotion as any lieutenant in the navy, but that now all those agreeable hopes were swept away. Major Talbot magnanimously endeavored to console the crestfallen officer. Having ascertained that not a man on either side had been killed, Talbot had the prisoners secured below by coiling cables over the gratings. He then got both vessels under way and ran into Stonington that evening, where the prisoners were landed and marched to Providence on the following day.

"The good effects resulting from this well-planned and bravely executed enterprise," said a contemporary writer, "were numerous and extensive. The spirit of the people, which by the failure of the late attempt on the English garrison at Newport had been greatly depressed, was raised, and the intercourse by sea, which, to the immense prejudice of this part of the country, had long been shut up, was now opened." For this handsome exploit Congress promoted Talbot to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, while the General Assembly of Rhode Island presented him and his senior officer with swords.

Stimulated by his successes against the *Asia* and *Pigot*, Talbot next formed a plan for destroying the 50-gun ship *Renown*, which the enemy, late in 1778, stationed off Rhode Island. An old, high-sided merchant ship, of about four hundred tons, was thereupon moved down the river a few miles below Providence, and a stage was built on her deck, as if for carrying cattle. This construction was calculated to be about seven feet higher above the surface of the water than the upper tier of guns in the *Renown*, and was spread out over the sides in order to facilitate boarding when the two vessels lay close together. Moreover, its height would not only enable the men to command the decks of the enemy, but would place them above the fire of their guns. To drive their antagonists from their upper decks, the Colonel provided a great number of stout earthen pots, each of which held three pounds of dry gunpowder and three hand grenades ready charged. These fire pots were securely closed, and then, to preserve them from accidental wetting, were covered with sheep or lamb skin, with the

wool on the outside. Over all were lashed two pieces of slow match long enough to serve as handles, the ends reaching below the pots as much as twelve inches. By repeated experiments, the Colonel found that any man of ordinary strength could throw these contrivances a distance of forty feet with considerable accuracy. Their fall on the deck would infallibly break them and scatter the contents, whereupon the fire of the slow match would communicate with the loose powder, and in an instant with the grenades. It was the Colonel's design, in real action, to station one hundred men in a convenient part of his ship with one of these fire pots in each hand. He conceived that the explosion on the enemy's decks of two hundred pots, containing together six hundred pounds of dry powder, and the successive bursting of hundreds of hand grenades, would, in the night, when supplemented by musketry fire from two hundred men and the shouts and huzzas of all, produce a terrible scene of destruction and alarm at the outset. He felt confident that this plan would drive the enemy from their quarters, so that the boarding party might, without great difficulty, succeed in getting possession of the quarter-deck of the man-of-war. Talbot also counted on the reported lack of discipline aboard the *Renown* as a considerable factor in the success of this enterprise, for he had learned from some prisoners who had been detained aboard this craft that her officers were especially negligent at night.

On the evening selected for the attempt, the American vessel dropped six miles farther down the river, while a body of nearly four hundred men marched along the shore, abreast of her, ready to embark and take part in the attempt when all was ready. Unfortunately for the projectors of this daring scheme, the weather that night suddenly came on very cold, and ice formed so rapidly in the river as to prevent the land force from getting aboard. When morning dawned conditions were even worse, for it was found that the river was completely frozen over, which held both the *Renown* and the merchantman immovable all that winter. To guard against any attack on the *Renown* over the ice, the British placed a large detachment of soldiers aboard her. When navigation opened in the spring the *Renown* was ordered from this station, her place being taken by a 44-gun ship, which anchored under the guns of the fort in Newport Harbor. Talbot reasoned that the Englishman's crew would be less vigilant in this safer anchorage than when stationed farther up the river and therefore determined to make an attempt upon her. This enterprising officer again prepared the old merchantman, and with three hundred and fifty volunteers moved down the Providence River. Unfortunately, the pilot ran the ship hard and fast aground; and as she could not be floated again until the enemy would have been warned of the danger, Talbot was obliged to abandon his plan.

Observing the great success of the privateers that were fitted out by the rebelling colonists, a number of Tories in New York transformed some of their merchantmen in that port into private cruisers and sent them out to prey on the coastwise trade, with the result that in a short time American commerce in the vicinity of New York was almost

annihilated. This was especially the case in Long Island Sound and in the waters of Rhode Island. The effect of this Tory privateering, aided by the regular cruisers of the Royal Navy, was so injurious to the American cause that General Gates, commanding the Continental Army in the northern department, reported to Washington that it was almost impossible to secure provisions. At the latter's suggestion the little sloop *Argo*, of one hundred tons, was fitted with twelve 6-pounders, and under the command of Colonel Talbot, with sixty volunteers from the army—most of whom had been seamen—sailed from Providence, in May, 1779, to cruise after the mischievous Tories. The *Argo*, according to Caritat's "Life of Silas Talbot," "was steered with a long tiller, but had no wheel; had a high bulkhead. Her bulwarks also were very high. She had a wide stern, and her appearance altogether was like a clumsy Albany sloop." Proceeding around the east end of Long Island, Talbot fell in with the privateer *Lively*, Captain Stout, of New York, mounting twelve 6-pounders. This craft was made out early in the morning, and the *Argo* promptly gave chase. After a hard run of five hours, in which the Tory made every effort to avoid a fight, Talbot succeeded in catching up with her and compelled her to strike. She was sent into port. Three or four days after this the *Argo* sighted two enemy vessels, which proved to be from the West Indies, heavily laden and bound for New York. Both of them surrendered after the Americans were fairly alongside, and with prize crews aboard they were carried into Boston.

Not only were the Tories in New York active in fitting out privateers, but those in Newport also sent out the stout brig *King George*, Captain Hazard, mounting fourteen 6-pounders and manned by eighty men. Captain Hazard was a native of Rhode Island, and had been univer-

From an engraving in the library of the Rhode Island Historical Society

Kindness of H. M. Chapin

NEWPORT ABOUT 1739

The types of vessels shown in the view are typical of the period of King George's War.

sally esteemed till he took command of this privateer for the purpose of plundering his neighbors and old friends. Whenever the *Argo* went out from Providence, Stonington, New London, or any other port in that quarter, where she occasionally ran in for the night, it was the common wish of the inhabitants that she might take or sink Captain Hazard.

Colonel Talbot soon had the satisfaction of gratifying this patriotic desire of the New Englanders; for on his second cruise, when about one hundred and twenty miles south of Long Island, on an exceptionally beautiful and calm day, a vessel was sighted about noon, which was discovered to be the *King George*. The ships gradually approached each other; and, when within a short distance, Talbot hailed, to his great pleasure he found his hail answered by Captain Hazard in person. The *Argo* was promptly run alongside, and, delivering her broadside, the Americans boarded and soon drove their enemies below, not a man on either side being killed. Placing a prize crew aboard the *King George*, Talbot ordered her into New London, where she arrived amid the cheers of the populace. Soon after this most gratifying success, the *Argo* seized an American privateer which was in the hands of a British crew and sent her into New Bedford. During the same cruise, Talbot captured the British merchant brig *Elliott*, from London for New York, and sent her into New London. She had a valuable cargo of dry goods and provisions.

This "army privateer" had now taken five vessels without serious fighting. Talbot had developed his men to the highest state of efficiency, and they were anxious to test their mettle against that of a worthy foe. Early one morning in August, when the sloop was at sea, a sail was discovered which soon gave promise of a struggle. She was quickly made out to be a large ship, armed, and full of men. As the stranger showed no disposition to avoid the *Argo*, the two craft were soon within gunshot of each other, the Americans at their cannon ready for action. After exchanging hails and finding that they were enemies, both vessels opened an animated fire. The battle was fought within pistol shot, and lasted four hours and a half. At one time the speaking trumpet which Colonel Talbot held to his mouth was pierced by shot in two places, and about the same time a cannon ball took off the skirt of his coat. The *Argo* was getting a real taste of a sea fight, for after the action had lasted several hours nearly all the men stationed on her quarter-deck were killed or wounded. Talbot pluckily continued the fight, notwithstanding his severe losses, and finally had the satisfaction of observing his opponent's mainmast fall. Upon this the Englishmen surrendered, and announced their ship to be the privateer *Dragon*, of three hundred tons, mounting fourteen 6-pounders and manned by eighty men.

Just as the enemy's colors came down, Talbot was informed by one of his officers who had been stationed in the magazine below that the *Argo* was sinking and that the water in her hold had already reached the gun deck. At this alarming report, Talbot promptly ordered the

sides of his sloop to be inspected, believing the cause of the inrushing water to be shot holes. His surmise proved to be correct, and in a short time men were swung over the sides, who plugged the holes, after which all hands manned the pumps and succeeded in clearing the sloop of water. The *Dragon* was then manned and sent into New Bedford.

Scarcely had the American repaired damages when another sail was reported. This was the English privateer brig *Hannah*, of two hundred tons, armed with twelve 12-pounders and two 6-pounders. Although she was a vessel twice the size and force of his own, Colonel Talbot did not hesitate to attack her. Soon after the action began, the American privateer *Macaroni*, Captain D. Keybold, of Pennsylvania, a brig of 6 guns and 20 men, drew near, upon which the *Hannah* surrendered. She was sent into New Bedford in company with the *Dragon*. When the *Argo* returned to port with these last prizes, she was so much shivered in her hull and rigging by the shot which had pierced her in the last two engagements that all who beheld her were astonished that a vessel of her diminutive size could suffer so much and yet get safely to port. The country people came down from a considerable distance, just to see Colonel Talbot and his prizes, and to count the shot marks on the *Argo*. On September 17, 1779, Congress gave Talbot a commission as captain in the navy, and further declared that his pay as lieutenant colonel should continue until he could be employed by the marine committee.

After refitting, the *Argo* put to sea, and, skirting the southern coast of Long Island, appeared off Sandy Hook, where she fell in with the privateer *Saratoga*, Captain Munroe, of Providence. While these two vessels were cruising in company off the Hook, on a clear moonlight night, the English privateer *Dublin*, Captain Fagan, fitted out by the Tories in New York, was discovered coming out. After a short consultation between the American commanders, it was agreed that, in order to induce the *Dublin* to give battle, the little *Argo* with two less guns than the enemy should boldly approach Sandy Hook and challenge the Tories to action. In accordance with this program Talbot stood close in, and, after exchanging hails with Captain Fagan, engaged him in a spirited fight. For two hours the crews battled with great determination, the Americans wondering greatly at the failure of their consort, the *Saratoga*, to come up to their assistance as agreed upon. The reason for her failure to do so was a peculiar one. The *Saratoga* was steered with a long wooden tiller on ordinary occasions, but in time of action the wooden tiller was unshipped and put out of the way, and she was then steered with an iron one that was shipped into the rudderhead from the cabin. In the hurry of preparing for battle, this iron tiller had been shoved into the opening of the rudder case, but had not entered its mortise in the rudderhead at all, and the *Saratoga* went away with the wind at a smart rate, to the surprise of Captain Talbot and the still greater surprise of Captain Munroe, who repeatedly called to the helmsman:

"Hard a-weather, hard up there!"

"It is hard up, sir," was the reply.

"You lie, you blackguard! She goes away lasking. Hard a-weather, I say again."

"It is hard a-weather, indeed, sir," was the only reply the helmsman could make.

Captain Munroe was astonished, and could not conceive what was the matter with his vessel. He took in the after sails and made all the headsail in his power. "All" would not do, and away she went. He was in the utmost vexation lest Captain Talbot should think him actually running away. At last one of his under officers suggested that possibly the iron tiller had not entered the rudder-head, which on examination was found to be the case. The blunder was soon corrected, and the *Saratoga* was made to stand toward the enemy; and that some satisfaction might be had for his long absence Captain Munroe determined, as soon as he got up, to give them a whole broadside at once. He did so, and the *Dublin* immediately struck her colors. The privateers carried their prize into Egg Harbor. The day following the capture of the *Dublin* the *Argo* seized the British merchant brig *Chance*, from London for New York, laden with a valuable cargo of stores for the invading army. She was of about two hundred tons, and was also carried into Egg Harbor.

A few days after this successful cruise, the boy at the *Argo's* mast-head, at about ten o'clock in the morning, reported a ship on the horizon. Talbot made all sail in chase of the stranger, which made every effort to get away. All that day the pursuit was maintained, and by nightfall the Americans had gained only slightly. A clear night enabled the *Argo* to keep her quarry in sight, and early on the following morning she had her within long gunshot. Talbot now believed that she was a large transport bound for the West Indies, and, as he could not discover any guns or gun ports, he was extremely anxious to get up to her. The stranger was running dead before the wind, which was her best point of sailing, but about ten o'clock the wind died away. As they were within gunshot, the Americans made every preparation for battle, while the stranger all the time kept her stern toward her pursuer, so that it was impossible to ascertain her force.

Just as the *Argo* was getting ready to open fire, the people in the chase were observed getting out their sweeps, and in a few minutes they had brought their broadside to bear, and to the astonishment of the Americans the stranger ran out thirty guns and delivered a terrific broadside. The little *Argo* had been chasing a ship of the line, and was now becalmed under her guns! Captain Talbot promptly set all hands at the sweeps. Fortunately, the enemy fired with more haste than accuracy, though several of his shots did hull the sloop, killing one of the crew and wounding another. By great exertions the crew of the *Argo* gradually worked the sloop to a position on the enemy's quarter, and in the course of several hours managed to get beyond the reach of his guns, whereupon the Americans, utterly exhausted, threw themselves on the deck and rested. Soon afterward a breeze

sprang up and the *Argo* effected her escape. The stranger proved to be the *Raisonnable*, which had been sent from New York with all possible speed to join the British fleet in the West Indies. Had it not been for this circumstance, the *Raisonnable* might have captured the *Argo*. One of her shots, a 32-pounder, penetrated the *Argo's* bulwark, smashed a boat, and spent itself on the deck.

Early in September, shortly after his adventure with this ship of the line, Captain Talbot discovered a sail standing toward him which was believed to be a British privateer. Soon she was made out to be a brig of considerable force, apparently using her utmost endeavors to overhaul the little sloop. Talbot allowed her to approach within pistol shot, when he exchanged hails. The brig then showed English colors, whereupon Talbot displayed the Stars and Stripes, calling out:

"You must now haul down those British colors, my friend!"

The commander of the brig, a Scotchman, coolly replied with a dignity and elaborateness worthy of a Chesterfield:

"Notwithstanding I find you an enemy, as I suspected, yet, sir, I believe I shall let them hang a little bit longer—with your permission—so fire away, Flanagan."

This was the signal for both vessels to open, and for nearly an hour a spirited cannonade was maintained, when the Scotchman, having all of his officers and many of his men killed or wounded, surrendered. The brig was the *Betsey*, a privateer pierced for sixteen guns, but mounting only twelve 6-pounders, with a crew of 38 men. She was bound for New York, and had on board two hundred and fourteen puncheons of rum. Shortly after this, Talbot captured a sloop from New Providence bound for New York with a cargo of stores for the British army.

When Captain Talbot returned to Providence after this cruise he found awaiting him there orders from Congress to return the *Argo* to her owner, Nicholas Low, of New York. The sloop which had served so well as an "army privateer" had been seized without the owner's permission, as he could not be reached when she was needed for her important work. This little vessel had taken, while under Talbot's command, twelve prizes, and had rendered inestimable service to the American cause, not only in ridding the southern coast of New England of Tory privateers and in taking valuable prizes, with three hundred prisoners, but in opening navigation so that the army under General Gates could receive much-needed supplies.

After his relinquishment of the command of the *Argo*, every effort was made by the authorities to secure another vessel for this successful privateersman. In the summer of 1780 the private cruiser *General Washington* of Providence, mounting twenty 6-pounders and manned by 120 men, was fitted out and placed under his orders. In his first cruise in this formidable vessel Talbot captured a valuable merchantman from Charleston for London, which was sent into Boston. Afterwards he took a British ship from the West Indies for Ireland, but this prize was recaptured before reaching port. Running up to Sandy Hook after this capture, Talbot inadvertently ran into the British

fleet under Admiral Arbuthnot. He made sail to escape, hotly pursued. The wind soon increased to a strong gale, and one of the enemy, a 74-gun ship of the line, carried away her foreyard and dropped astern. The ship of the line *Culloden*, however, continued the chase, and finally captured the privateer. Captain Talbot was taken aboard the *Robuste*, Captain Cosby—afterward Admiral—and was treated with courtesy. From this vessel Talbot was transferred to a tender and taken to New York, and was confined in the *Jersey*, where he received rather ill treatment. Toward the close of the year 1780, with a number of other American officers and seamen, Talbot was placed in the ship of the line *Yarmouth*, Captain Lutwidge—afterward Admiral—and taken to England. After being incarcerated in Plymouth Prison some months, he was released in October, 1781, and made his way to France. Early in the following year he sailed from Nantes for Rhode Island in a brig commanded by Captain Folger. When fifteen days out, the vessel was captured by the British privateer *Jupiter*, Captain Craig, who treated his prisoners with kindness. Falling in with a British brig from Lisbon for New York, Captain Craig placed Talbot aboard her, remarking that he had been a prisoner so long, and had suffered so much, that he ought to have the earliest opportunity to reach home. Arriving at New York, he took passage in a lumber boat to Stony Brook, Long Island, from which place he walked some fifteen miles to a tavern kept by one Munroe, at Huntington. After remaining here a week, he crossed the Sound at night in a boat and landed at Fairfield, Connecticut, from which place he made his way overland to Providence. After the war Talbot was regularly attached to the navy and commanded the famous frigate *Constitution* in 1799, when she had her merry race with a British warship of the same class. One of the torpedo boats of our new navy has been named *Silas Talbot* after this skillful and daring privateersman, the hero of so many engagements.

CAPTAIN NOAH STODDARD

Captain Noah Stoddard, of Fairhaven, was a prominent privateer commander of the Revolution, and participated in many spirited conflicts. Conspicuous among his exploits was the capture of Lunenburg, a little town on the shore near Halifax, Nova Scotia. An expedition consisting of four privateers—the *Scammel*, commanded by himself; the *Hero*, Captain Babcock; the *Hope*, Captain Woodbury; and the *Swallow*, Captain Tibbets—sailed for that place on July 1, 1782, and landed a force of ninety men under Lieutenant Barteman, two miles below the town. They marched rapidly with the intention of surprising the inhabitants, but were greeted with heavy discharges of musketry as they entered the town. They quickly burned the commanding officer's headquarters, a blockhouse in the northwest part of the town, spiked two 24-pounders, and drove the plucky defenders into the south blockhouse. Here their opponents made a stubborn resistance, opened a brisk fire on the invaders, and disclosed

their purpose to hold out to the last extremity. Their courage forsook them, however, on the receipt of several four-pound shot from the *Hero*, and they surrendered themselves prisoners of war. The victorious party, with a natural and happy vivacity, fell to plundering the town, and quickly emptied the stores of a considerable quantity of dry goods, beef, pork, flour, and twenty puncheons of West India rum. While this was being accomplished, the combined fleet approached the town, two 18-pound guns were spiked and dismounted, and the royal magazine was captured and taken on board the *Scammel*. The town was finally ransomed for £1,000. Colonel Creighton, with several prominent citizens, was made prisoner and placed in charge of Captain Stoddard. As one account says, "The strictest decorum was observed towards the inhabitants, their wearing apparel and household furniture being inviolably preserved for their use. On the side of the brave sons of liberty, three were wounded slightly or dangerously; on the part of the abettors of oppression and despotism the number of slain and wounded was unknown, only one of the slain being found."

That some of the privateersmen who performed so well for the public good during days of warfare continued their interest in public affairs in times of peace is shown by the following incidents which are associated with Captain Stoddard's home town of Fairhaven. At one time an exciting question was under discussion, and the pent-up walls of the town house could not contain the populace. Therefore an adjournment to the open green was decided upon, where the orators continued the debate. When the vote was taken, the house divided, as was then the custom, this time on either side of the road, the persuasive tongues of the leaders still wagging to influence the voters as they took their positions. Captain Noah Stoddard, the doughty privateersman, became much excited, and as the voters moved to the side of the road where he stood he pointed with pride to his flock and shouted, "I began alone on this question, and now, you see, I have a respectable company." Caleb Congdon, of Bedford village, an equally enthusiastic leader on the other side, thereupon retorted, "Yes, and old Cloven-foot commenced his career alone, and he's got a respectable following, too."

On the 4th of July, 1801, a unique military display was undertaken in Fairhaven by the Democrats, being a reproduction of the assault and defence of Bunker Hill. A broad field with a high hill, in front of Joshua L. Pope's house, was selected as the centre of operations, and weeks before the event the people were busy with the arrangements. The place was prepared with masked ramparts, built of plank, behind which the "Yankee" forces were to resist the attacks of the "British." It is recorded that Captain Stoddard, who was an enthusiastic Democrat, loaned his fine horse to the representatives of the "British" crown for the event. In view of his wartime activities, this, naturally, occasioned much amusement, and Mr. Stoddard was the recipient of good-natured chaffing when his fiery charger appeared on the scene with the attacking party. The "British" army, not in

red coats, but in homespun of Yankee yeomanry, filed in through the wall in front of Mr. Pope's house. The force on the hill gathered noiselessly by a route in the rear. It was afternoon when, after various marches and countermarches, the onslaught began, after which other attacks and repulses followed rapidly until the dead and wounded, in large numbers, lay scattered over the field. Finally the hill was stormed with the bayonet and defended with clubbed muskets, until at last the flags of the Pine Tree of Massachusetts retreated down the hill to the frog pond, and the victors took possession. The whole affair was well done, and it is said that the field and its surroundings resembled so well the original that the scene of action was often called "Bunker Hill."

SOME PRIVATEERSMEN OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

In the days when this country had no public armed vessels, or next to none, and the Colonies had to rely almost alone upon what were often called "private men of war," Newport sent out many of these "militiamen of the sea" which performed valuable service.

As early as April 15, 1649, Roger Williams, to whom Rhode Island owes so much, wrote to John Winthrop of Connecticut about a prize which had been taken and brought into port by a Captain Clarke. It is not certain, however, that the latter held a commission as a privateersman. In the same year, a Dutch captain by the name of Blauvelt also brought into Newport a prize which the Governor found had been taken during a truce. At that time there was no government ship in the harbor, however, to enforce the law; and as the townspeople wished to buy the cargo and the sailors wanted the prize money, everybody was satisfied.

During the war between England and the United Provinces in 1652, while the island of Rhode Island was separated from the Providence Plantations, the Colony was authorized by the British government to issue commissions to private armed vessels, and was directed to use its exertions to offend the persons and property of the enemy. Trouble on Long Island between the Dutch and Indians on one side and the Puritans on the other induced the latter to appeal to Rhode Island for assistance. Four privateers were therefore commissioned and manned. One of these was commanded by William Dyer, whose wife, Mary, twenty years later, sealed her faith in the doctrines of the Prince of Peace with a martyr's death on Boston Common. These four vessels took many prizes and fought desperately against the Dutch and Indians, with complete success. This was the war, it will be remembered, in which Van Tromp defeated Blake and then sailed home bearing a broom at the topmast head of his ship, thus indicating that he had swept the channel of the enemies of his country. Soon after, however, by the irony of fate, the haughty Dutchman was sent home defeated and discomfited by his gallant antagonist, thereby affording another evidence that a proud spirit goeth before a fall.

Among the ablest, most distinguished and successful of the early

Newport privateersmen were John and William Wanton, whose portraits showing them in their Quaker garb hang upon the walls of the Rhode Island Senate Chamber among those of the governors of the Colony. They were descendants of Edward Wanton, a Massachusetts officer, who stood under the scaffold at the execution of Mary Dyer, and who, it is said, was converted to Quakerism by her fortitude. Upon the outbreak of Queen Anne's War, these two Wantons, with many other Rhode Islanders, engaged with alacrity in privateering activities. Many were stimulated, no doubt, by the success of Charles Wager, who, owing to his brave conduct in conflict with an enemy privateer, had been taken into the service of the British navy, where he gained rapid promotion. Later he was knighted and appointed first lord of the British admiralty, a member of the privy council, and an influential member of Sir Robert Walpole's administration. He was also, by the way, the first to lay down the rule which gave the common sailor the right to share in prize money after a victory.

In taking up again the story of the Wanton brothers, it might be well to describe one of their most important feats, which was performed early in the war. A French privateer, superior in tonnage and metal to anything in the Colony, had been annoying the colonial commerce and committing depredations upon the farms adjacent to the seashore. The Wantons determined by some stratagem to bring this adversary to grief, and during a period of foggy weather they put to sea to ascertain where the enemy craft lay anchored. Approaching during the daytime within convenient distance, they awaited nightfall and then, in the yawl belonging to their vessel, the two brothers rowed up under the counter of the Frenchman and firmly inserted wedges between the rudderhead and the sternpost. They then regained their own ship, and in the morning hauled up and attacked on the quarter, where a gun could not be brought to bear upon them. The enemy was thereupon compelled to surrender.

On another occasion, an enemy privateer was on the coast inflicting great damage upon the trade of Newport. Not having a proper vessel, or guns of sufficient calibre, the Wantons filled the hold of a sloop with men armed with cutlasses and small arms, and sailed out of the harbor as if they were going on a trading voyage. When they sighted the privateer, they directed their vessel as if they would avoid their adversary, but the latter gave chase and the Wantons were overtaken. A cannon shot was thrown across their bow, whereupon they bore up and, passing under the stern of the privateer, their vessel was laid alongside and firmly made fast. The men from below rushed out and boarded the enemy as rapidly as possible, and proceeded to clear her deck with such vigor that the Frenchman soon surrendered.

Passing on to the Spanish or King George's War of 1739, which became the Spanish-French War in 1744, when France united her fortunes with those of Spain against England, we find the inhabitants of Rhode Island at the height of their loyalty to the "Mother Country." Newport was then an active commercial port, her merchants were full of enterprise and of the spirit of adventure, and her sailors

were eager for the strife. Among the more prominent merchants of that day were Godfrey and Evan Malbone, John and Peleg Brown, John Bannister, Sueton Grant, Henry Collins, John Channing, Philip Wilkinson and the Wantons, besides many others equally intelligent and enterprising. Numbered among the experienced sea captains, trained amid privations and accustomed to hazardous adventures, were Benjamin Wickham, Charles Davidson, James Allen, William Hopkins, Joseph Powers, Hugh Wentworth, Simeon Potter, Robert Morris, Benjamin Carr, and Peter Marshall, to name a few. The vessels which performed excellent service during this period are too many in number to be listed fully here, but we might mention the *Revenge*, the *Virgin Queen*, the *Duke of Marlborough*, the *Tartar*, the *St. Andrew*, the *Cæsar*, the *King George*, the *Prince Frederick*, the *Phœnix*, the *Prince Charles of Lorraine*, the *Defiance* and the *Reprisal*.

Rhode Island was famous at that time for the number and the success of her privateers. There was but little objection then to the profession of privateering, as the moral sentiment of the civilized world had not yet been roused against it. England and Spain were at war, and the West Indian seas were white with the sails of national fleets and private armed vessels. Privateering afforded a vent for the active and restless spirits of the Colonies; and it was not without some creditable associations, for the life of a privateersman was full of the charms of novelty, adventure and risk.

These privateers went out each in its chosen path; this one to

Kindness of H. M. Chapin

JOHN AND WILLIAM WANTON

Famous in the early privateering days of Newport, Rhode Island, whose portraits, of which the above are reproductions, hang upon the walls of the Rhode Island Senate Chamber among paintings of the governors of the Colony.

intercept the African cruiser, to capture her cargo of human flesh; that one for the West India trade; a third voyaged on the Spanish Main hoping to encounter some richly laden galleon; while a fourth would go to the banks of Newfoundland to intercept the commerce of the enemy with the Canadas. The hand-to-hand conflicts, the terrible battles fought, the rich prizes taken, the stratagems and valor shown, would all be of interest; but a publication of this nature will not allow us to record them here in detail. It was the practice in the early days to capture a prize, have it condemned and, if adapted for the service, to have it fitted and commissioned as a privateer, in this way augmenting greatly the number of the captor's cruisers.

The most vulnerable point in the commerce of the Colony was the slave trade. Many of the vessels engaged in this commerce would take from Newport a cargo, generally of rum, to the coast of Africa, where a shipload of slaves was obtained and carried to the West Indies for sale. Then, loading with molasses and sugar, they would head back to Newport. The course of this trade was well understood by the enemy, and, to the French, a cargo of slaves was the most coveted prize afforded. Let us refer to a single incident as a specimen case, showing the embarrassments attending trade at this time. The facts are recorded as follows:

I, Joseph Wanton, being one of the people called Quakers, and conscientiously scrupulous about taking an oath, upon solemn affirmation say that on the 1st day of the month commonly called April A.D. 1758, I sailed from Newport in the *Snow King of Prussia*, with a cargo of 124 hogshead of rum, 20 barrels of rum, and other cargo; that on the 20th day of the month called May, I made Cape Mount on the west coast of Africa; that I ran down the coast and traded until I arrived at Annamibo, where, while at anchor, on the 23rd day of the month called July, when I had on board 54 slaves, 20 ounces of gold-dust, and 65 hogshead of rum, I was taken by a French privateer of 60 guns, fitted out in Bordeaux, called *Le Compte de St. Florentine*, having on board between 500 and 600 men, while my vessel had but 3 small pieces and 11 men.

Wanton was left destitute on the coast of Africa, and soon afterward two other Newport vessels were captured at the same place. One of the ships, which was given to a native African prince, was turned over by him to the three crews, who returned home in her.

It is said that Commodore Abraham Whipple, who was born September 9, 1733, in Providence, Rhode Island, fired in the engagement with the *Rose* in 1772 what is supposed to be the first gun of the Revolution on the water. On one cruise, he took 23 prizes to the value of $1,000,000, and probably captured more enemy vessels than any other American privateer in the Revolution. In 1780 he went to Charleston, South Carolina, in an endeavor to relieve that city, which was then besieged by the British, but he was captured and held prisoner until the close of the war.

When the Louisburg expedition was planned, Captain Daniel Fones was given command of the *Tartar*, with a complement of 100 men, to serve as a convoy to the Connecticut transports. On the voyage he

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COMMODORE ABRAHAM WHIPPLE

His ship is supposed to have fired the first gun of the Revolution on the water in the engagement with the *Rose* in 1772.

fell in with the French frigate *Renommé* and contrived to attract the attention of the enemy and to lead her away from the convoy. Having full confidence in the sailing qualities of his command, he led the frigate a merry chase for eight hours, and then sailed away from her for Louisburg. During the siege, it was learned that nine hundred French and Indians were about to cross the Bay of Fundy to attack the British forces in the rear. On the 5th of June, 1745, Captain Fones, in the *Tartar*, was directed to take reënforcements and drive back this body of the enemy. The latter had two sloops, two schooners and sixty large canoes. They were, nevertheless, repulsed with considerable slaughter, and forced to withdraw. Two of the guns on board the *Tartar* at that time may now be seen in Washington Square, Newport, Rhode Island. The success of Captain Fones in this encounter undoubtedly decided the fate of Louisburg; for if the force mentioned above had fallen upon the rear of the attacking party, thus placing them between two fires, they would probably have had to raise the siege.

That all ventures were not successful and that misfortune did not overlook Newport in those early days is shown by the fact that late in 1744 Sueton Grant, John Gidley and Nathaniel Coddington, Jr., three of her prominent citizens, were killed by an explosion which took place while they were at the wharf examining a privateer about to sail. The year following, Godfrey Malbone built two large privateers and fitted them for sea, one under the command of Captain Cranston and the other under Captain Brewer. They were destined to sail in company and cruise the Spanish Main. According to the custom of the time their joint horoscope was cast, and the figure disclosed that they should sail on Friday the 24th of December of the year 1745. Manned by four hundred men, they left port in a violent snowstorm, and were never afterward heard from. It was said that in this disaster perished the heads of two hundred Newport families.

On September 7, 1744, Captain Simeon Potter, a native of Bristol, sailed from Newport in command of the *Prince Charles of Lorraine*, belonging to Sueton Grant, Peleg Brown and Nathaniel Coddington, Jr. For his lieutenant, Captain Potter selected a Newporter by the name of Daniel Vaughan, while his clerk was a young man by the name of Mark Anthony DeWolf, who was destined to be the founder of a well-known Rhode Island family. Captain Potter had a long and interesting career, and at one time became involved in a lengthy lawsuit brought against him by the widow of Sueton Grant and the crew of the privateer, to recover their shares of prizes and prize money taken on one of his cruises. After he abandoned the sea, he became a member of each house of the General Assembly and was always a resolute and determined person, given alike to charity and to controversy. He was a violent Whig and an Episcopalian, yet he knocked down the Episcopal parson, a Tory, in the streets of Bristol. He gave liberally to charity in Bristol, and in Newport he endowed a school for the poor. A very successful merchant, he died February 21, 1806, at the great age of ninety-one, in the town of Swansea, leaving his large fortune to his sisters, one of whom married Mark Anthony DeWolf.

From "Rhode Island Privateers," by H. M. Chapin

NAVAL CANNON OF 1740 FROM THE *TARTAR*

This privateer took an important part in the capture of Louisburg. The cannon on the left is now at the southwest corner of Washington Square, Newport, Rhode Island, and the cannon on the right is at the northwest corner of the same square.

During the Revolutionary War, the Governor of Rhode Island issued nearly two hundred privateer commissions and, no doubt, it was a great inducement to the British to take and hold Newport, thereby depriving the privateers of the facilities that Narragansett Bay afforded for the prosecution of their hazardous enterprises. Many old vessels, like the *Revenge* and the *Defiance*, were among the earliest to show their broadsides in defiance to the enemies of their country.

John Paul Jones endeavored to enlist men in Newport, but, as the privateer service had too many attractions, he was delayed in getting a sufficient number. The privateer *Eagle*, in command of Captain Isaac Field, sailed from Newport in 1776 and anchored in Tarpaulin Cove off Naushon Island. The following day Jones, in the *Alfred*, went out, laid his ship alongside the *Eagle* and took from her, by force, 24 men to complete the *Alfred's* complement.

An interesting incident concerning these times might well be inserted here. While the British were in possession of Newport, during the Revolutionary War, they fitted out two privateers, manned by loyalists, one under command of Stanton Hazard, mentioned in a previous chapter, and the other under a man by the name of Crandall. The latter surprised and captured a vessel commanded by Oliver Read, taking his prisoners to Wallabout Bay and putting them on board

the Jersey prison ship. While being transferred, as Read passed the victorious captain he glanced at him and said in a subdued but angry tone, "If I am ever out of this, there will be a short life for one of us." By forming acquaintances among his fellow-prisoners whom he could trust, Read, who was a very adventuresome sort of man, succeeded with a few others in effecting his escape. Landing on Long Island, he found his way to Rhode Island after some difficulty, and was soon again in command of another privateer. Some time afterward, while cruising near Long Island, he recognized Crandall's vessel, and after a hard fight captured his adversary's ship. Upon boarding his prize, he beheld the dead and mangled body of Crandall, his old enemy, upon the deck. His threat had been fulfilled, but it is said that this sight moved the privateersman to tears.

Before leaving the subject of the Newport privateers, it might be well to record the names of some of the more prominent owners of vessels of this type during the Revolutionary War. John and Nicholas Brown, Jacob and Griffin Greene, Governor Nicholas Cooke, and Silas Casey take high rank among the owners; while among the captains were brave, audacious and capable men like John Grimes, William Dennis, Joseph Sheffield, Samuel Dunn, Jr., Robert Elliott, Israel Ambrose, John Updike, Joseph Olney, William Rhodes, and Elijah Payne.

It can readily be seen that the citizens of Newport took an important part in the early warfare of our country on the high seas, with credit to themselves and the port from which they sailed.

THE THREE "YANKEES" OF MASSACHUSETTS IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

Among the first of the privateers to put to sea at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War were the *Yankee*, the *Yankee Hero* and the *Yankee Ranger*, all of Massachusetts.

The *Yankee* was a large sloop, carrying 9 guns and a complement of 16 men. Under command of Captain Johnson, she set sail early in the war, and in July, 1776, captured the valuable British merchantmen *Creighton* and *Zachara*, laden with rum and sugar, as were so many of the vessels of those days. After detailing prize crews aboard the two merchantmen, Captain Johnson proceeded to escort them to an American port. Before reaching his destination, however, the prisoners in the prizes rose against their captors, retook the ships, and then united in an attack on the *Yankee*. As Johnson's original crew consisted of but 16 men, later seriously reduced by the drafts for prize crews, the privateer was soon compelled to surrender. Each of the British crews numbered more than the entire complement of the *Yankee*, and in addition to the advantage of numbers the merchantmen were well armed, so that this result of the adventure is hardly to be wondered at. The *Creighton* and *Zachara* sailed for Dover, England, with their prize, and Captain Johnson and his men were thrown into Mill Prison.

Under Captain J. Tracy, the *Yankee Hero*, a brig of 14 guns and a crew of 40 men, was also unfortunate in its efforts to cripple the commerce of the enemy. In June, 1776, this privateer was chased by the English frigate *Lively*, and, although the American captain did his best to outsail his powerful pursuer, the Englishman managed to get alongside and compelled the surrender of the smaller vessel—not, however, until the latter had made a desperate resistance in which 4 of her crew were killed and 13 wounded.

The *Yankee Ranger* was the most fortunate of this trio of "Bay State" privateers, for on one voyage in August, 1776, she took prizes of three brigs laden with cotton, coffee and oil.

THE "YANKEES" OF RHODE ISLAND

Although one of the smallest States in the Union, Rhode Island sent out several privateers in the War of 1812 which made up for deficiency in numbers by the great amount of damage they inflicted on the enemy's commerce.

Yankee, both in the Revolution and in the War of 1812, seemed to be a favorite name, for we find among some of the most noted craft not only the simple word *Yankee* but also the *True-Blooded Yankee*, the *Yankee Lass*, the *Yankee American* and the *Yankee Porter*. The last two, though hailing from Salem and New York, respectively, were largely manned by Rhode Island seamen.

The first to put to sea was the *Yankee*, whose owners were James DeWolf and John Smith of Bristol. Captain Oliver Wilson was in command on her first cruise, which lasted a little over a month. During this time she had one spirited combat, which ended successfully with the capture of the *Royal Bounty*, followed by several other prizes, some of which were quite valuable. Her second cruise resulted in the taking, with comparatively little opposition, of the *Mary Ann*, loaded with gold dust, ivory and camwood to the value of $28,000; and of the *Alder*, containing 400 casks of musket flints, a quantity of bar lead, iron and dry goods, and sundry other articles valued in all at $36,000. She also captured the *Thames* of Liverpool, with a cargo of dry goods, camwood and redwood worth $40,000; the *Harriet and Matilda*, valued at $41,000; and the *Shannon*, with a cargo worth $34,000. Two other minor captures were made; so that in a cruise of 150 days, 8 vessels, 196 men, 406 muskets, and property to the value of $296,000 were taken. Soon after settling her accounts, the *Yankee* put to sea again, this time under command of Captain Elisha Snow, and continued her successful career. Her fourth cruise was under command of Thomas Jones, and, although it lasted but 49 days, it proved very lucrative. Owing to the rigorous blockade maintained by the British fleet off Rhode Island, the *Yankee* did not get to sea again until May or June, 1814, when she was again under the same captain. During this cruise she took four vessels—one alone bringing nearly $600,000 when sold in Portland. Her owners received as their share of the profits nearly a quarter of a million dollars, while not a

boy in the *Yankee* got less than $700. Captain Snow received $15,789, and even the negro boys in the cabin, Cuffee Cockroach and Jack Jibsheet, received $1,121.88 and $738.19 respectively.

On her sixth and last cruise, the *Yankee* was commanded by William C. Jenkes until he had the misfortune to lose one of his legs, whereupon he was succeeded by B. K. Churchill. Sailing on October 1, 1814, she put into Beaufort, North Carolina, on January 21 of the following year, having taken six vessels of considerable value. On these six cruises she captured 9 ships, 25 brigs, 5 schooners and 1 sloop, a total of 40 vessels. Furthermore, she seized or destroyed property to the value of five million dollars, and sent into Bristol alone one million dollars' worth of goods.

Of the *True-Blooded Yankee* there appeared in a Baltimore paper a statement to the effect that this vessel had at last been taken by the enemy. A week later followed this explanation: "It is the *young True-Blooded Yankee* that was taken by the British—the *old True-Blooded Yankee* is going on in the *old* way."

A DARING NEW ENGLAND PRIVATEERSMAN

During the war of the Revolution, the sloop *Winthrop* was built in what was then the District of Maine in Massachusetts, for the express purpose of protecting our coasting trade, which had suffered much from the depredations of the enemy. She mounted 13 guns and was commanded by Captain George Little of Mansfield, with Edward Preble of Portland second in command.

The *Winthrop* was a very fortunate vessel, and more than answered the expectations of those who built her. After several successful adventures, she recaptured a sloop belonging to William Gray which had been taken by the British brig *Meriam*, of equal or superior force to herself. The captured vessel had been placed in the hands of a prize crew, with orders to follow to the attractive little fishing port of Penobscot, to which place the *Meriam* herself proceeded. Upon learning all this, Captain Little resolved upon the daring plan of taking the *Meriam* from under the guns of the enemy.

He first of all disguised his vessel so as to give her as much as possible the appearance of the prize sloop, and then entered the harbor of Penobscot in the evening. As he passed the fort he was hailed, and answered, "The *Meriam's* prize." Being suffered to pass, he then ran up toward the brig, and as he approached her was again hailed and gave the same answer. "Take care," cried they on board the *Meriam*, "you'll run foul of us!" He informed them that he had been ashore on a reef and had lost his cables and anchors, requesting them to throw him a warp, which was immediately done. The *Winthrop* was then hauled up to the brig, and Lieutenant Preble, as had been arranged, jumped on board with a number of men who had their various duties assigned them, while others slipped the cables, made sail, etc. Preble, with a few of his followers, entered the cabin where the officers were just changing their dress preparatory to going

on shore. All resistance was soon overcome, and the two vessels quickly made their way out of the harbor, although fired upon unsuccessfully by the guns of the fort. Captain Little judged it best not to return the fire, but when safely out of reach of their shot he triumphantly let off thirteen skyrockets—apparently one for each of the original States of this great Nation. Two more prizes were taken on this cruise before her prow was turned homeward. The five vessels entered the harbor together in fine style, with a leading breeze—and a gallant show they made!

THE *GENERAL ARMSTRONG'S* LAST FIGHT

"Tell the story to your sons
Of the gallant days of yore,
When the brig of seven guns
Fought the fleet of seven score:
From the set of sun till morn, through the long September night—
Ninety men against two thousand; and the ninety won the fight
In the harbor of Fayal the Azore."

(Although the *General Armstrong* was not a New England vessel, we feel warranted in including this story, as it is one of the outstanding events of the times and has to do with members of a well-known Boston family.)

This privateer brig, of New York, was one of the most formidable of her time, and had several successful cruises to her credit. Under command of Captain Samuel C. Reid, she sailed for the last time from Sandy Hook on the 9th of September, 1814, and the very first night after leaving port was chased by a British frigate and a ship of the line. Outsailing both, the privateer continued on her cruise with varied encounters until the 26th of September, when her Captain brought her to anchor in Fayal Roads for the purpose of taking on water and obtaining a fresh supply of rations. The Captain then paid his respects to the American Consul, John B. Dabney, a member, by the way, of one of Boston's oldest and most prominent families, who, after ordering water immediately sent off, accompanied the Captain on board. About dusk, while they were still conversing, the British brig *Carnation* hove in sight, and soon hauled close in and let go her anchor within pistol shot of the American. Shortly afterward, two more British warships appeared on the scene—the *Plantagenet* and the frigate *Rota*. After an exchange of signals between the enemy's vessels, so much activity of an unusual nature developed that Captain Reid's suspicions were aroused, and he determined to clear his ship for action and to haul her in nearer the shore.

As soon as this was observed, the enemy's brig instantly dispatched four boats in pursuit. This action took place about 8 P.M., when the moon was near its full, which gave sufficient light to render every movement plainly visible. The British boats were well manned and armed and, although hailed repeatedly as they drew near, they made no reply. Apparently sure of their game, they only pulled with greater

From a painting in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society

LETTER OF MARQUE SHIP *BETHEL* OF BOSTON

Isaac Freeman, Master, 14 guns, 37 men, owned by Josiah Quincy, Edward Jackson, and their English partner, Slingsby Bethel, which by a clever ruse captured a large Spanish ship in 1748, without firing a gun.

speed. The American fire was withheld until the enemy's boats drew alongside, when orders were given to open fire on them, with the result that they quickly withdrew. Captain Reid then hauled still closer to shore and moored head and stern.

Shortly after nine o'clock a large fleet of English boats started out to resume the attack. This time the fight was observed by many of the inhabitants of Fayal, who lined the shore, and on account of the brightness of the moon had a most favorable view of the scene. The Governor, himself, with many of the first people of the community, witnessed the whole affair. After seemingly endless manœuvring, the enemy decided about midnight to make the attack, and, as they approached the *General Armstrong*, it was discerned that there were twelve boats in line. The discharge of the American's long-tom stopped them momentarily, but soon they gave three cheers and came on most spiritedly. Repeated attempts at boarding were repulsed with great slaughter. The action lasted approximately forty minutes, and resulted in the attacking parties being completely driven off. Decks were then cleared for fresh action should the enemy attack again.

About 3 A.M. Captain Reid received a message from Consul Dabney requesting him to come ashore. There he learned that the Governor had sent a note to the British commander—Captain Lloyd—begging him to desist from further hostilities. To this request he replied that

he was now determined to take the privateer at the risk of knocking down the whole town. Upon hearing this news, Captain Reid realized that the superior forces of the enemy must in the end prevail. He, therefore, boarded his vessel and had all his wounded and dead removed to the shore, giving orders to the crew to save their effects as quickly as possible. Soon after this, daylight came, whereupon the enemy's brig stood close in and commenced a heavy fire on the American. After several broadsides she hauled off, as she had received in reply too many damaging shots from the *General Armstrong*. However, she soon returned, and anchored close to the privateer. Captain Reid then ordered that his ship be scuttled to prevent the enemy from cutting her out, and, shortly after her abandonment, the enemy boarded her and completed her destruction by setting her afire.

It might be well here to quote the words of Captain Reid concerning the American Consul at Fayal: "Mr. Dabney, our Consul, is a gentleman possessing every feeling of humanity, and to whom the utmost gratitude is due from us for his great care of the sick and wounded, and his polite attention to my officers and myself."

On Captain Reid's arrival in Savannah he was treated with great respect and kindness by all classes of people. On his way home to New York, he was the honored guest at a splendid public entertainment in Richmond, Virginia. There was a large gathering which included the Governor of the State, the Speaker of the House of Delegates, the President and members of the Legislature. One of the popular toasts was "The private cruisers of the United States—whose intrepidity has pierced the enemy's channels and bearded the lion in his den." Another toast was "Volunteers—the memory of the *General Armstrong;* she has 'graced her fall and made her ruin glorious.' "

While the foregoing may be more or less familiar to those who have delved to some extent into the maritime history of our country, the aftermath of this episode is not so well known, as it was staged in international diplomatic circles and eventually settled in the Court of Claims of the United States in 1856—forty-two years after the "Battle of Fayal."

The claim for indemnity made by the Captain and owners of the *General Armstrong* was prosecuted intermittently by our Government against Portugal for a period of over thirty-eight years. It was finally terminated on December 11, 1852, by a decision against the claimants which was handed down by none less than Louis Napoleon, the Prince President of France, who, as a result of a treaty entered into

From a miniature in the possession of a descendant of Captain Reid — *Kindness of C. K. Bolton*

CAPTAIN
SAMUEL CHESTER REID

Who commanded his ship *General Armstrong* so gallantly in the harbor of Fayal against greatly superior numbers.

Courtesy of a member of the Dabney family

FAYAL HARBOR

Showing the beautiful mountain of Pico in the background. It was in this port that the stirring engagement between the *General Armstrong* and three British warships took place, as described in the text.

Kindness of Augustin H. Parker

VIEW OF "BAGATELLE," THE SEAT OF JOHN B. DABNEY

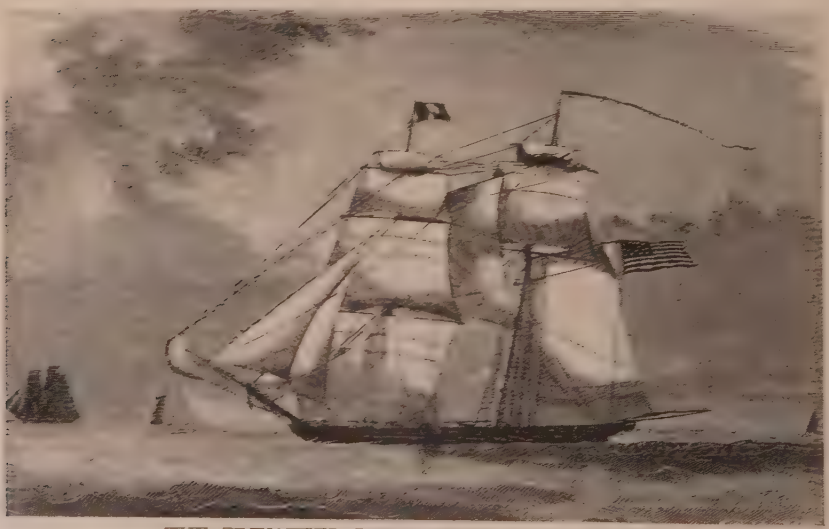
Consul of the United States for the Azores in Fayal. Mr. Dabney a member of one of Boston's oldest and most prominent families, was highly esteemed by all shipping men for his courtesy and assistance to vessels touching at Fayal. Three generations of the Dabney family, covering a period of eighty-five years, served as consuls at Fayal.

February 26, 1851, had been selected by the two nations involved as the arbiter of this dispute. President Millard Fillmore was then in the White House, and his Secretary of State was that great jurist and statesman, Daniel Webster. When negotiations were initiated between the United States and Portugal in regard to this case, the Portuguese Court was being held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to which city it had emigrated in 1807.

After the matter had been submitted to arbitration and decided against the Americans, the claimants took it up in the United States Court of Claims, where it was urged that the case had been improperly submitted to arbitration, and that the treaty had been so inefficiently managed by the Secretary of State that the claim was thereby lost before the arbitrator. On March 17, 1856, Chief Justice John J. Gilchrist delivered the opinion of the Court that "where an award is binding against the government, which by its own acts had disregarded and sacrificed the just rights of its citizens, it is bound to make compensation for the neglect of its duty in not affording them protection." It is interesting to note that Samuel C. Reid, Jr., son of the Captain of the *General Armstrong*, appeared as counsel for the claimants before the Court of Claims. It is also of interest to mention that a letter of the new Consul, Charles W. Dabney, son of the Consul who

showed so many courtesies to Captain Reid, was brought forward during the trial. When this document was presented, it was introduced as from the "glorious son of a noble sire," and revealed the fact that young Dabney, then in his twenty-first year, had carried on the night of the battle a message from his father to Captain Reid recommending that he warp his vessel close in under the guns of the castle. Just as he landed after delivering the message, he heard the first report of musketry. Later in the evening he was sent in quest of the Governor of Fayal, and in behalf of his father requested him to remonstrate with the British commander on the action he had taken. One of the Governor's aides was dispatched with an official remonstrance as soon as possible, but it failed to have the desired effect.

That this was a fateful night in more ways than one was brought out during the trial in the lengthy argument of Samuel C. Reid, Jr. He stated that according to English naval history and other authorities, Captain Lloyd's squadron was ordered to form a part of the force destined for the expedition against Louisiana and the capture of New Orleans. This force was to be concentrated at Jamaica under Admiral Cochrane. All the squadrons and reënforcements from England did not arrive at the rendezvous until the 24th of November, as Captain Lloyd had been delayed about ten days at Fayal on his way to Jamaica. Cochrane's fleet sailed on the 26th of November, arriving at New Orleans four days after General Jackson's entry into the city. If the fleet had appeared on the scene one week sooner, nothing could have prevented the British from marching into New



THE PRIVATEER BRIG *GENERAL ARMSTRONG*
CAPTAIN S. C. REID, COMMANDER
Which fought a most thrilling battle in the harbor of Fayal.

Orleans and taking possession of that city and the coast as high up the Mississippi River as it could be held. The defence of the *General Armstrong*, therefore, evidently saved Louisiana from the hands of the enemy. The motive for capturing the *Armstrong* was affirmed to be a double one—not only to obtain possession of the vessel, celebrated for her audacity and fast-sailing qualities, but to use her in the shallow waters of Lake Pontchartrain and the mouths of the Mississippi in the attack on New Orleans.

Thus Captain Reid by courage saved
New Orleans; and by victory paved
The way to noble, endless fame,
And won him an immortal name.

(From story of Fight at Fayal in poetry written at age of fourteen by Charles Knowles Bolton, now Secretary and Librarian of the Boston Athenæum)

DISPOSITION OF PRIZES

Certain legal procedure had to be gone through before the privateersmen could "cash in" on their prizes, as is readily shown by scanning the papers of those early days. The following extracts from the *Columbian Centinel* of 1815 mentioning two of the vessels already dealt with in this volume will show some of the publicity necessary before the officers and crew could receive their reward for voyages often filled with very real hazards:

Marshal's Notice.

United States of America,
District of Massachusetts, *ss.*

Pursuant to a Warrant from the Honorable the Judge of the District Court of the United States for the District aforesaid, I do hereby give public notice that a Libel has been filed before the said Judge,

By Thomas Oxnard commander of the private armed brigantine called the *True Blooded Yankee* of and belonging to Boston, in the District aforesaid, in behalf of himself and the owners, officers and crew of the said brigantine *True Blooded Yankee* against the ship *Cora*, whereof Thomas Farmer was late master, and her appurtenances, and the arms, ammunition and ship provisions, stores and cargo on board the same—the said ship, appurtenances and cargo as aforesaid, belonging, as is alleged by the said libellants, to the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or to a subject or subjects thereof—having been captured by the said Thomas Oxnard, commander of the said brigantine, on the high seas, pursuant to a commission from the President of the United States, under the seal of the United States, against the vessels, goods and effects of the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the subjects thereof, which said ship or vessel, appurtenances and cargo as aforesaid, the said Thomas Oxnard, commander as aforesaid, hath brought into the port of Morlaix, within the Kingdom alias Empire of France.

And trial will be had on the aforegoing Libel at a Special District Court, to be holden at the Court House in Boston, on Saturday, the fifth day of August next, at 11 o'clock A.M., of which all persons interested will take notice and govern themselves accordingly.

Given under my hand at Boston, this 14th day of July, A.D. 1815.

JAMES PRINCE, *Marshal.*

Later would follow a notice similar to the following:

Marshal's Sale.

United States of America,
District of Massachusetts, *ss.*

Pursuant to a Warrant from the Honorable the District Court of the United States for the district aforesaid, I do hereby give this public notice that I shall expose and sell at public auction, and to the highest bidder, on Messrs. Crowninshields', or India wharf, so called, in the town of Salem, on Wednesday, (This Day) 19th day of April, at 11 o'clock, A.M.

1630 sacks Spanish Filberts, of the very first quality and
100 sacks of soft shelled Almonds, do.

And at 12 o'clock; at noon of the same day, and at the same place, will be sold in like manner,

The elegant and fast-sailing, yet burthensome prize schooner *Arrow*, of about 153 tons, with her tackle, apparel and furniture, copper-bottomed, well found, and may be put to sea at a small expense. The said merchandize and vessel above mentioned having been captured by the private armed vessel-of-war the ship *America*, James Chever, Jun. Esq. Commander, and brought into the port of Salem, was libelled and condemned as enemy's property, and ordered to be sold for the benefit of the captors. Dated at Boston, this 10th day of April, 1815.

JAMES PRINCE, *Marshal.*

FURTHER NOTES UPON PRIVATEERING

The extracts given below, from various acts passed by the United States Government, we believe are little known, but they seem interesting enough to warrant their presentation here:

March 23, 1776—RESOLVED, That all ships and other vessels, their tackle, apparel, and furniture, and all goods, wares and merchandises, belonging to any inhabitant or inhabitants of Great Britain, taken on the high seas, or between high and low water mark, by any armed vessel, fitted out by any person or persons, and to whom commissions shall be granted, and being libelled and prosecuted in any court erected for the trial of maritime affairs, in any of these colonies, shall be deemed and adjudged to be lawful prize; *and after deducting and paying the wages, which the seamen and mariners on board of such captures, as are merchant ships and vessels, shall be entitled to, according to the terms of their contracts, until the time of the adjudication*, shall be condemned to and for the use of the owner or owners, and the officers, marines and mariners of such armed vessel, according to such rules and proportions as they shall agree on. . . .

June 26, 1812—SECTION 9. *And be it further enacted*, That a bounty shall be paid by the United States of twenty dollars for each person on board any armed ship or vessel, belonging to the enemy, at the commencement of an engagement, which shall be burnt, sunk, or destroyed, by any vessel commissioned as aforesaid, which shall be of equal or inferior force, the same to be divided as in other cases of prize money.

SECTION 17. *And be it further enacted*, That two per centum on the net amount (after deducting all charges and expenditures) of the prize money arising from captured vessels and cargoes, and on the net amount of the salvage of vessels and cargoes re-captured by the private armed vessels of the United

States, shall be secured and paid over to the collector or other chief officer of the customs at the port or place in the United States, at which such captured or re-captured vessels may arrive; or to the consul or other public agent of the United States residing at the port or place, not within the United States, at which such captured or re-captured vessels may arrive. And the monies arising therefrom shall be held and hereby are pledged by the government of the United States as a fund for the support and maintenance of the widows and orphans of such persons as may be slain, and for the support and maintenance of such persons as may be wounded and disabled on board of the private armed vessels of the United States, in any engagement with the enemy, to be assigned and distributed in such manner as shall hereafter by law be provided.

H. Clay,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

William H. Crawford,
President of the Senate, pro tempore.

June 26, 1812

Approved,

James Madison.

* * * * * * *

The following quotation from "Naval History of the United States," by Thomas Clark, published in 1814, seems worthy of repetition here:

The success of the American privateers, during the year 1777, in the capture of English merchantmen, was extremely great. Their daring spirit and boldness was unparalleled. Their enterprizes were no longer confined to the American seas. The coasts of Europe were now covered with them. The shores of Great Britain were insulted by these privateers, in a manner their hardiest enemies had never dared to attempt. Even the coasting trade of Ireland was rendered insecure. Into so great a state of alarm were the linen merchants thrown, that they petitioned for, and obtained a convoy for the linen ships, between Newry and Dublin, and Dublin and England. This was a circumstance before unheard of. The British merchants were forced to adopt the mortifying expedient of chartering foreign vessels, particularly French, to transport English goods to the continent of Europe. Thus was the immense naval force of Great Britain rendered incompetent fully to protect her own shipping, by the privateers of a country that possessed not a single sail of the line, and that had been only a year in existence as a nation.

The countenance given to American privateers by the French court alarmed the English ministry. The *General Miffin* privateer had committed great depredations along the English coasts. On entering the port of Brest, she saluted the French admiral. After the deliberation of an hour and a half, the admiral returned the salute in form, as to the vessel of a sovereign and independent state. Lord Stormont, the British ambassador at the court of Versailles, was much irritated at the procedure. He threatened to return to London, if they should continue thus to countenance the Americans. In consequence of his representations, an order was issued, requiring all American vessels to leave the ports of France. Notwithstanding this order was positive, yet so many evasions were practised, and the execution of it was so relaxed, that the American ships still continued to frequent the French ports, and to equip and refit in them.

(No. 1.)

Marshal's Sale.

CATALOGUE

OF

PRIZE GOODS,

CAPTURED BY

THE PRIVATE ARMED SCHOONER FOX,

ELIHU D BROWN, COMMANDER,

TO BE SOLD AT PUBLIC AUCTION,

In Portsmouth, N. H.

On SATURDAY the 16th of JULY, 1814.

SALE TO COMMENCE AT 2 O'CLOCK

MICHAEL M'CLARY, *Marshal.*
S. LARKIN, *Auct'r.*

PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

Printed by BECK & FOSTER.

Courtesy of Charles H. Taylor

COVER OF A CATALOGUE OF PRIZE GOODS TO BE SOLD AT PUBLIC AUCTION BY THE UNITED STATES MARSHAL

This gives an idea of some of the business details involved in privateering.

PRIVATEERSMEN REALIZED THE VALUE OF PUBLICITY

From the

Morning Chronicle & General Advertiser

Hail Liberty Divine, and Peace, First-Born of Heaven!

Vol. II. Thursday, March 23, 1780. Numb. 75.

For Amsterdam.

The Ship *Rambler*, Benjamin Lovett, Commander, mounted with 16 six-pounders, at close Quarters, navigated by 50 Men or upwards, will sail by the 20th of April, at furtherest, for freight on board said Ship, either from hence to Amsterdam, or from thence to this Continent; apply to Messieurs Job Prince and Co. or Mr. Charles Sigourny, in Boston; Mess'rs John and Andrew Cabot, or the Commander on board said Ship, at Beverly, where they may know the Terms on which freight will be received.

Beverly, March 20, 1780.

* * * * * * * *

The Private Ship of War

General Mifflin, mounting 20 six-pounders, will be ready to Sail by the 1st of April. All Gentlemen, Officers and Seamen, that intend to make their Fortune, under my command, are requested to repair on Board said ship, by the 25th of this Month, where good Encouragement will be given.

George Babcock, *Commander*

Boston, 13, March 1780.

* * * * * * * *

The following excerpt from the *Columbian Centinel* of July 15, 1812, gives a sidelight on the hazards of travel by ship in those early days when privateers were roving o'er the seas:

PIRATEERING

Mr. Russell,—Misstatements having been made of an outrage committed on the coasting schooner *Enterprize*, by a Marblehead privateer, and having been a passenger on board the *Enterprize*, I am induced to give the following statement of facts.

The *Enterprize*, Hersham master, sailed from Penobscot as a coaster, with firewood in hold and fish and lumber on deck. On the 6th July inst. in Boston bay, about two miles from half-way rock, we fell in with the Marblehead privateer *Germantown*, Hooper commander, who very valiantly fired at and brought us to, and then boarded us with a prizemaster and eight men, armed with pistols and cutlasses, in such a ruffian-like manner as very much frightened a lady passenger and her child, and whose ferocious conduct could not be restrained by the prizemaster, who appeared to be as much of a gentleman as the nature of his new profession would admit. This crew examined

KNOW all Men by theſe Preſents, That we John Conway Mariner
as principal Sam.l Pole James Lasbey
of Marblehead
as Sureties are held and ſtand firmly bound to the Hon. HENRY GARDNER, Eſq; Treaſurer of the State of Maſſachuſetts-Bay, in the Sum of Four Thouſand Pounds, to be paid to the ſaid HENRY GARDNER, Eſq; Treaſurer and Receiver-General of the State aforeſaid, or to his Succeſſor or Succeſſors in the ſaid Office, in Truſt for the Uſe of the ſaid State, to which Payment well and truly to be done, we do bind ourſelves, our Heirs, Executors and Adminiſtrators, jointly and ſeverally, firmly by theſe Preſents. Sealed with our Seals, and dated this Eleventh Day of May in the Year of our LORD, 1779

The Condition of this Obligation is ſuch, that whereas it is neceſſary that all Perſons taken at Sea on board of Prizes, ſhould be brought into this or ſome of the United States, to the End there may be a Number ſufficient to redeem ſuch Subjects of the United States as may fall into the Enemy's Hands; and alſo that all Perſons in the Pay of this, or any of the United States, ſhould be effectually prevented going on Board any Armed Veſſels. Now if the ſaid John Conway or Commander of the Armed Veſſel called the Terrible ſhall well and truly put on Shore and deliver to the Commiſſary of Priſoners in ſome of the United States, all Priſoners by him captured, and ſhall not carry out with him any Perſon in Pay of this State, or any Officer or Soldier belonging to the Continental Army, then this Bond to be Void, otherwiſe to remain in full Force and Virtue.

Signed, Sealed and Delivered, in Preſence of

H. J. Sibley
Jno Dall

John Conway
Samuel Pole
James Lasbey

Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society

BOND FILED WITH THE STATE

Guaranteeing the turning over of prisoners to the State, etc.

the schooner half an hour, and then ordered us to bear down to the privateer; —the Captain of which came on board, searched and examined the papers, and then ordered us to proceed; we had proceeded about a mile, when we were again fired at, and the same prizemaster and crew boarded us a second time, made a bon prize of us and made sail for Marblehead. A proposition was then made to them to conduct us to Quincy, and there to inspect the unloading of the schooner—which would save them expense, which they refused, but carried us into Marblehead, where the vessel was again examined, the deck load taken off, and we detained nearly two days. They then began to talk of a compromise; when, being only a freighter, and being anxious for the release of the lady under my care from her fears, I stipulated that they should land the lady and child, and my freight, in Quincy free of all expense, and pay me 40 dollars for the 40 hours detention, which they agreed to, fulfilled, and gave me what they called an honorable discharge.

As the public may wish to know, who the owners of this privateer is which is thus aiding the enemy in making war on American property, I give their names to wit: Thomas Appleton, Wm. Bear, J. H. Gregory, John L. Harris, J. G. Hooper, S. W. Phillips, John Humphreys, S. Turner, Edward Barry, Wm. Elliot, Richard Brewer, B. Robinson, James Topsham, jun., Ambrose Martin, Lot Martin, David Kingsbury (the two last conducted themselves towards us like gentlemen) J. C. Blackler, T. M. Bowen, Benj. Stevens, Dan Weed, and John Johnson.

With esteem and regard your humble servant,

JAMES BRACKETT, jun.

Quincy, July 14, 1812.

* * * * * * *

Another of the interesting items which frequently appeared in those stirring days is taken from the news columns of the *Columbian Centinel* of May 22, 1813. One can well imagine the excitement which prevailed in the particular localities affected:

LOSS OF PRIVATEER *ALEXANDER*

The corvette-built privateer *Alexander*, Capt. B. Crowninshield, of Salem, was chased on shore near Kennebunk, on Wednesday last, by the sloop of war *Ratler* (rated 16 guns). The *Alexander* had but about 40 men of her crew on board—having put the rest on board prizes—and endeavored to reach Portsmouth, but being cut off, she was run ashore as above, and the *Ratler* was so close in pursuit, that she came to anchor within half gun-shot, immediately after the *Alexander* struck; so that only about 20 of the crew of the *Alexander* effected their escape to the shore—some by swimming. The oversetting of a boat retarded their escape, and the officers entered into an agreement with the British, that they should not be molested from the shore in getting off the ship, on condition of their paroling the rest. There were about 60 British prisoners on board the *Alexander*, and 10,000 dollars worth of goods taken out of prizes, all of which of course reverted to the British. The tide being flood, the *Alexander* was got off. The *A.* had captured 7 prizes (one of which only has arrived). She took two on Sunday last; and captured a sloop from Halifax for the West-Indies, with part of the *Volont* cargo on board. The re-taken *Invincible Napoleon* was one of her prizes.

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In this volume we have presented tales of noted New England privateersmen; and it is our hope that in addition to providing a publication which will prove enjoyable, we may also have succeeded in furnishing, in an entertaining way, information of historical value to our readers and helped them to appreciate more fully another phase of the background of the New England of today.

That romance and adventure had their parts in the lives of our ancestors is readily perceived from the stories herein recounted, and it is safe to say that the same pioneer spirit is alive in the descendants of the men of those days and will do much to maintain the prestige of New England in the affairs of the nation and the world.

RETROSPECT

Keep to your manly war games; keep to your warriors' play,
Though the dove of peace is dancing to the sounding truce harp's lay.
Arbitrate if you have to; smooth it o'er if you must;
But be prepared for battle, to parry the war king's thrust.
Don't foster the chip on the shoulder; don't hasten the slap in the face;
But burnish your sword, ere you're older—the blade of the ancient race.
Hark to the deeds of your fathers; cherish the stories I've told,
Then—go and do like, if you have to—and die—like a Hero of old.

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